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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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THE Other Fundamentalists

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

JUNE 12, 1995

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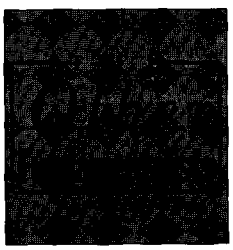

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CORRESPONDENCE

The darkness

To the editors:
The bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City was a political act ("An American Darkness," May 15). To depoliticize it, as Americans are wont to do, only means the message will have to be gotten across by another means—or, as is more likely the case, by another bombing. This political act is wedded closely to where it happened: the heartland. Americans should be surprised if this kind of bombing happened anywhere else. For this is the heartland's dirty little secret: it has never been part of the political establishment of the East Coast, nor of the anti-establishment establishment of the West Coast. When it feels threatened by either, it will retaliate.

Newt Gingrich's prattle is not a political act; it is an establishment act. The attempt to connect the bombing and Gingrich's prattle puts the two in more or less the same ballpark. True, he can inspire politicians, but have you noticed his approval ratings among the people?

FREDERICK A. KREUZIGER
Dallas, Texas

To the editors:
I have three questions for Robert Wright ("Did Newt Do It?" May 15). Would his definition of a "bomb thrower" include Bill Clay and John Lewis, who both compared Republicans to Nazis not long ago? Would it also include Pat Schroeder, who described Rush Limbaugh's fans as "goose-stepping" in a recent St. Louis speech? And is the Richard Gephardt who supposedly cleaned up his act the same Richard Gephardt who recently went on television and attempted to assert that some Washington-area kids wouldn't be getting lunches under the Republican school-lunch plan? By Wright's own test, Newt Gingrich isn't the only one who should feel ashamed.

CHRISTOPHER S. JOHNSON
Webster Groves, Missouri

To the editors:
Since the Oklahoma City bombing, blame has been cast at right-wing talk radio for creating a climate that supports violence, and its hosts have been labeled "purveyors of hate." Since we are busy blaming the media for its culpability in the bombing, why stop at such a narrow slice of the media? Why not look at the role other media played in the bombing, specifically, the movie media?

In recent years, the mad-bomber motif has poured from Hollywood and flooded our hometowns. Movies such as *Speed, The Specialist, Blown Away,* and the ever-popular *Lethal Weapon* and *Die Hard* series have glorified the mad bomber as an evil genius that requires a top cop to stop. In every film, the explosions are spectacular and the horror is detached from the crime.

The Hollywood folk who attended a $50,000 per plate fund-raiser for President Clinton profit from glorifying random violence and desensitizing us to it. They are as much to blame for creating a climate where violence thrives as the right-wing talk show hosts. The defense is the same too: it's just entertainment. If we are going to find the road to Oklahoma City, we must search all venues that feed the system, not just the rickety cart path that leads to convenient bogeymen.

MICHAEL COLLINS
Virginia Beach, Virginia

To the editors:
If you pride yourself on logical consistency, then why not ask if eco-worrywart Al Gore "appealed to the worst in human nature" and inflamed the passions of that eco-terrorist known as the Unabomber?

RICH KARLGAARD
Los Altos, California

To the editors:
Alex Heard in "The Road to Oklahoma City" (May 15) states that I said on Ron Engelman's radio show that I saw the Branch Davidians flash a Morse code signal one night that read: "Three die DDT milk." This is a fabrication. The caller, an elderly man named Greg, made no mention of me, nor did Engelman. I called Heard, who had been corresponding with me for two to three months before the bombing. Heard says that he received this information from Engelman. Unfortunately, Engelman sometimes experiences lapses in memory. Heard said that he tried to call me the day before his deadline, but I was not at home. In any case, without verification this assertion should rightfully have been omitted from the article.

KEN FAWCETT
Royse City, Texas

Inexorable temptation

To the editors:
I find it intriguing that Waco-right-wing militia-type activists are deplored and exposed for their deranged conspiracy theories in the same issue that John B. Judis applauds the sleazy genius of Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown ("Sleazy Genius," May 15). The first article properly condemns irresponsible thought; the second breeds the same.

Judis's article claimed that Brown, as a government official, succumbed to the inexorable temptation. "He is [a] product of an amoral and corrupting legal and lobbying culture." I have worked in Washington, and I concede that this temptation does exist. But it is no excuse. Judis calls for a sympathetic understanding of such corruptness. He wants Americans to view it as a complimentary attribute that "effective" officials must express.

I loathe such reasoning. Nothing contributes more to the mentality of the Waco-fixated fringe than their perceived socioeconomic status of "have not" while they see government leaders as a corrupt "have" class.

MARCUS R. MUMFORD
Clifton, Idaho

Walking alone

To the editors:
Stanley Kauffmann recognizes that the use of "You'll Never Walk Alone" in the film *Priest* ("Altar Ego," May 15) has a significance but is puzzled as to what it might be. The song, although from the musical *Carousel,* is by some identified with Liverpool, the city in which the film is set. After the song was covered in 1963 by Gerry and the Pacemakers, it became the anthem of the fans of the Liverpool Football Club. Since then it has been adopted more generally by the inhabitants of a city for whom football is more serious than life or death. Thus it is their music and not that of the director, as Kauffmann supposes.

IAN SKIDMORE
Cary, North Carolina

To the editors:
As a Catholic, I was offended by Stanley Kauffmann's attempt to balance the clerical rogues' gallery in the preceding fourteen paragraphs with a sentimental description of a lone personal encounter with a Benedictine monk.

Kauffmann reports that he had asked the monk how he dealt in the confessional with such subjects as premarital and extramarital sex. The monk reportedly said, "I tell them not to bother me with stuff like that. I ask them if they have done anything really grave. For instance, have they broken a promise to a child?"

If that's what the monk said, both he and Kauffmann need to ponder what they are really saying. To Catholics, marriage is a sacrament whose core is a sacred promise of faithfulness by a man and woman in the presence of God, with a priest as the chief witness to their lifelong commitment. Is not a child the fruit of the love and mutual promises

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made by his or her parents? What greater promise can one give one's child than to stay committed to a wholesome and stable family life?

Catholics are used to encountering a broad range of both overt and covert ideological attacks on Catholic beliefs in the pages of the national press. But heaven help us—it sounds like we've also lost the Benedictines!

MARY ANN LAWLOR
Crozet, Virginia

Pure genius

To the editors:

"Geniuses need no subsidy to flourish," Stanislaw Baranczak says at the start of his review of Joseph Frank's latest volume on Dostoevsky ("The Gambler," May 15). It sounds, in this country at any rate, like a tautology we all should have absorbed in grade school along with biographies of Edison and Donald Trump. But who knows? Times and economies change, the control of information takes new forms, the permeability of culture to novel ideas and artistic productions is a very complex issue.

"Genius" is a term probably only responsibly applied a fair lapse after death. The MacArthur awards experiment is still quite young. It's nothing but churlish to promote a genius who bested appalling circumstances in Russia in the last century as a model for today's purported literary slackers who might hope for an occasional modest break from remunerative labors and family life. Are we sorry that William Gaddis (in my premature speculation, a potential genius) has received Lannan and MacArthur awards? Don't we feel that beleaguered Robert Musil might have come a bit closer to his grand design if he didn't have to write newspaper pieces?

In any case, why should "the rest of the pack ... go to hell," as Baranczak's next phrase puts it? Only geniuses (perhaps dead) deserve recognition? I make a fuss because Baranczak, though he claims to "shudder at the thought," nonetheless specifically links his notion of genius to "the foes of the National Endowment for the Arts," who need no extra encouragement through such spurious argument.

THOMAS FRICK
Austin, Texas

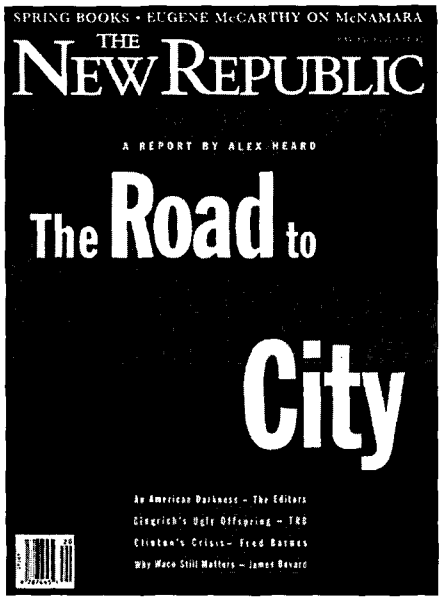
The gentleman

To the editors:

David Bromwich's review of Gertrude Himmelfarb's latest call for a return to "Victorian" virtues ("Victoria's Secret," May 15) overlooks the key Victorian text on the matter: John Henry Newman on the "gentleman." It's simple enough. We are first taught manners by our mothers and then the basics of morality: clean hands, bottoms, mouths and minds. We may be well-mannered without being moral but cannot be moral without manners. It's a case of coordination of our faculties. Manners are an arm against the impertinences of life.

But neither they nor morals are enough. Himmelfarb falls into the trap of Arnold's Sweetness & Light (Sugar & Moonshine) when she calls for the reading of Great Texts as a "moral" exercise. The Rilke-spouting concentration-camp warden gave the lie to that false hope.

GABRIEL AUSTIN
New York, New York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An American Darkness – The Editors
Gingrich's Ugly Offspring – TRB
Clinton's Crisis – Fred Barnes
Why Waco Still Matters – James Bovard

Takings exception

To the editors:

If your editors wish to oppose compensation for landowners whose right to use their own land has been taken from them by the federal government ("Earth to Congress," May 8), so be it. But they should not distort the facts in the process.

First, the "takings" provision does not apply "whenever" wetlands or endangered species regulations "reduce the value of the owner's land by as little as 20 percent." Only those losses of land value that are attributable to government-imposed restrictions on the use of private land are compensable. Reductions in land value, per se, are not, even if attributable to government actions.

Second, the idea that this provision allows speculators to buy land, propose development and rake in a windfall when the proposal is barred by the government is ludicrous. For this to be the case, land values would have to skyrocket at the mere suggestion that it might be developed—an unlikely scenario. Otherwise, developers would only receive compensation for their initial costs—what they paid for the land, minus its remaining value after the government imposed restrictions.

Most important, your editorial claims that the Endangered Species Act rarely prevents landowners from using their land. Even Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt acknowledges that the law has more impact than that. On March 6, Babbitt said, "The fact is, the Endangered Species Act has caused difficulty for some small landowners who have protected species on their property." If the government official entrusted with enforcing the Endangered Species Act can acknowledge its costs, I would expect the editors of TNR to do the same.

JONATHAN H. ADLER
Washington, D.C.

Lichtenberg

To the editors:

Leon Wieseltier writes in the first paragraph of his Diarist "Gog, Magog, Agog" (May 15), "Some people think that a proposition is true, said Lichtenberg, simply because they have understood it." Lichtenberg? I did a word search through my CD-ROM versions of Compton's New Century Encyclopedia, Grolier's Encyclopedia and the Mindscape Reference Library without finding any Lichtenbergs. I searched my Library of the Future, finding all 950 texts there totally Lichtenberg-less. My conclusion is that Lichtenberg is so totally obscure a figure that nobody should casually drop him into a sentence without so much as a first name to identify him by. I finally found one likely Lichtenberg in my Oxford Dictionary of Quotations: Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, listed as "German scientist and drama critic." Oxford provides a single quote, which coincidentally seems appropriate to the point under discussion: "*Die Zeitungsschreiber haben sich ein hölzernes Capellchen erbaut, das sie auch den Tempel des Ruhms nennen, worinn sie den ganzen Tag Vorträte anschlagen und abnehmen und ein Gehämmer machen, dass man sein eignes Wort nicht hört.*"

Translated, it reads: "The journalists have constructed for themselves a little wooden chapel, which they also call the Temple of Fame, in which they put up and take down portraits all day long and make such a hammering you can't hear yourself speak."

IAN ABRAMS
Los Angeles, California

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FROM WASHINGTON

Tricks of the trade

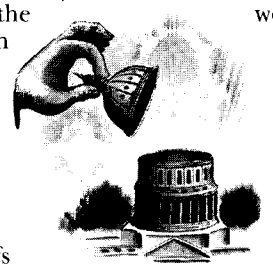
Rightly or wrongly, Bill Clinton is considered the most desperately political president of modern times. He is thought of as someone who wakes up each morning, looks at his approval rating, and asks: What things can I do to raise that number by tomorrow? Then he does some. Then he does some more. Then, exhausted, he climbs into bed. This caricature has at least one hole in it. At some political cost, Clinton defenders note, he has helped build multilateral bodies—notably the World Trade Organization—that will smooth commerce and prevent trade wars, bringing prosperity and stability to an otherwise fractious post-cold-war world.

Sounds great. But now Clinton has started a trade fight with Japan that could gravely harm the WTO; and, by most accounts, approval rating is the lodestar. Indeed, conventional wisdom holds that the tariffs against Japan are, politically, a can't-lose move, masterfully engineered by 1992 campaign manager Mickey Kantor (a.k.a. U.S. Trade Representative). Regardless of the economic outcome, we're told, Clinton will have won the favor of labor in key states like Michigan; and he'll have shown, as a *Newsweek* puff piece on Kantor just put it, that "Bill Clinton can back up his tough talk with action."

Are the politics of trade really so simple? Certainly if Japan's car companies step in and save face for both governments, swallowing "voluntary" auto-parts quotas, Clinton wins. And, even if they don't, his muscle-flexing could help stave off an in-house challenge from, say, Dick Gephardt. But if Clinton really is tailoring major geopolitical policies to gain marginal advantage over an unlikely challenger, he's even more pathetically insecure, and less trustworthy, than people think. Besides, the Democrat in Congress who's made the most recent noises about a challenge is Bill Bradley. And for Clinton to play the Japanese card against a principled multilateralist free trader like Bradley is to risk support in the center even as he gains it on the left.

As for the general election: Does Clinton really need to guard the labor vote against Bob Dole or Phil Gramm? If things are that bad he should spare himself the humiliation of even running. True, a rival for labor's affection could come in the form of a neo-populist: Pat Buchanan (God forbid) or Ross Perot (God forbid). But imagine Clinton struggling to outbid *them* for the economic nationalist vote.

Actually, it's instructive to try. Assume the most likely WTO ruling: (1) Our complaint against Japan gets some vindication, but only on counts unrelated to the auto-parts squabble, and thus to our punitive tariffs. (2) Japan cleanly wins its complaint against those tariffs. What does Clinton do? Kantor has hinted that the United States would abide by such a ruling, withdrawing the tariffs, but that may just mean he hasn't thought through the politics. This retreat would feed the claims of Perot and Buchanan (and heartland militiamen) that the WTO saps American sovereignty.



Still, sticking with the tariffs isn't much more appealing. Under WTO rules, Japan could then levy a counter-sanction—maybe even a weighty one that, say, would cost jobs at Boeing. And this sanction would now have the force of international law. Granted, "force" is an overstatement—and in that sense sticking with our tariffs would have the virtue of showing sovereignty fears to be overblown. After all, the WTO can't *compel* us to withdraw tariffs, and any Japanese sanctions it blesses could have been levied without its blessing. Still, international law can have real moral effect. In this case the WTO ruling would ensure that any American counter-counter-sanction drew broad western rebuke. For Clinton, that's the problem: bowing to that pressure and *not* escalating the war could be cast as surrender to the WTO's black helicopters.

Assuming Japan doesn't blink, there would be no escaping this dilemma. Clinton could either walk down the slippery slope toward an economically—and politically—devastating trade war, or back down and thus strengthen his neo-populist rivals. Indeed, with the WTO having dissed us, Clinton would be hard-pressed to explain even to non-paranoid voters why he created it in the first place.

Just to refresh his memory: because past, (even) weaker incarnations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade had let many countries violate trade rules, costing America jobs. We knew all along that the WTO wouldn't cure all ills. It can't break up Japan's *keiretsus*, the informal webs of obligation that keep auto companies buying from traditional parts suppliers. Then again, no global body could have broken up GM or Ford back when—as Barry Bosworth of Brookings has noted—they were vertically integrated and did roughly the same thing: used their own auto parts, cheap alternatives notwithstanding. (Imagine the yelping from Perot and Buchanan if the WTO *could* make antitrust law.)

From the beginning, backers of the WTO knew that, because international law lacks police, its moral authority matters—and that some American restraint might be needed to nourish this authority during the WTO's formative years. We deemed such sacrifice a wise long-term investment in the sturdiness of rules that benefit America. Alas, long-term thinking isn't Clinton's forte. If it were, he would have responded to the Japanese impasse simply by filing the broad WTO complaint against the Japanese system. (Though Japan's protectionism is subtle, it features enough clear if small breaches of trade rules to bring a verdict in America's favor, though not a momentous one.) America's first experience with the WTO, Clinton's fragile legacy, would have been at least mildly pleasant.

Instead—barring a deus ex Toyota—Clinton will probably face these options: *(a)* meekly abide by an adverse ruling, poisoning American opinion toward the WTO and helping Perot and Buchanan; *(b)* defy the WTO, encouraging the world's defiance of future rulings, and inviting Japanese counter-sanctions that will force Clinton to choose between risking a true trade war and swallowing pride at real political cost. Both options are bad for the world (which we're part of, by the way), and neither is political nirvana for Clinton. Meanwhile, *Newsweek* piles accolades on mastermind Mickey Kantor. "Give the credit to Kantor," who has "hit his stride."

The article continues: "Kantor's offensive leaves Clinton in precisely the right position, visibly committed to economic openness—he has stood up for free trade with Mexico and for last year's global-trade pact—while at the same time standing ready to man the barricades against foreign unfairness." That would indeed be nice positioning, were it possible. But you can't fight every instance of "foreign unfairness" while still supporting a "global-trade pact." The real world has ugly trade-offs. You make your ideological choice and stick with it. Or you go back and forth, seeking respect so desperately that you never find it.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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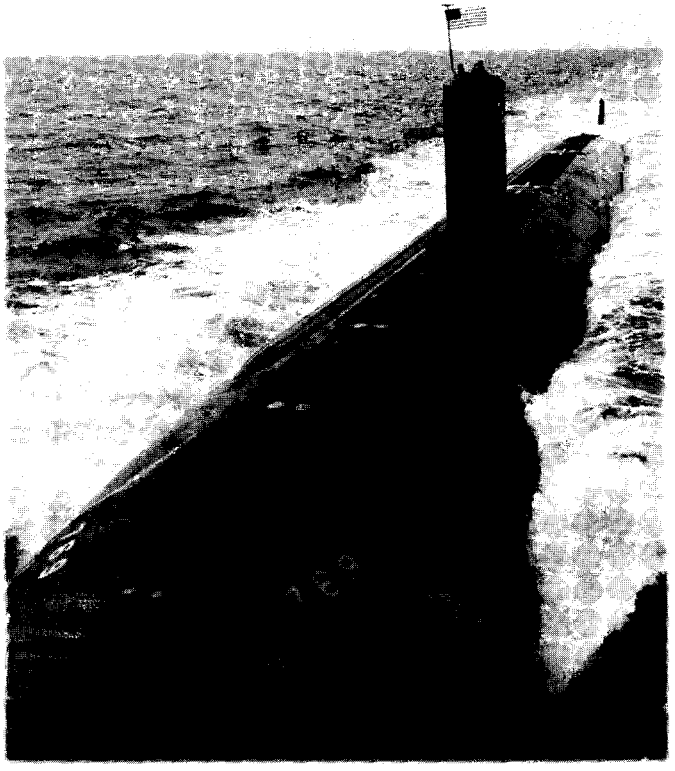

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CORNERING CANCER

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JUNE 12, 1995

THE PORN BROKER, CONTINUED

You're a genuinely conservative politician who shares the Christian right's misgivings about R- as well as X-rated movies. You're suddenly presented with clear evidence that you once invested in R-rated, soft-porn and radical left-wing movies. To make matters worse, you had the wife of a colleague sign the partnership agreement, in order to cover your political tracks. What do you do? Easy: you admit you made a youthful error and swear it won't happen again. End of subject.

You're clearly not Phil Gramm. His reaction to John B. Judis's article last week (see "The Porn Broker," June 5) is perhaps as worrying as anything in the article itself. It certainly confirms the heart of the story: that Gramm is an opportunist, with few principles, a tendency to dissemble and a shameless desire for power.

Take, to begin, the subtle way in which Gramm kept changing his story. When we first asked him a range of questions about his investments in three movies, he admitted the core of the story: that he had invested in *Beauty Queens,* knew it was an "R-rated spoof of beauty contests," while denying he had actually seen a script of the movie. Within a day, Gramm said he had made a "blind" investment in *Beauty Queens* without knowing anything about the movie. Here's what the *Austin American-Statesman* reported: Gramm said he and an associate invested $7,500 each with George Caton, his then-brother-in-law, in 1974, without having any idea how it would be used. A short time later, he received a contract saying the money would be used for *Beauty Queens.* By this account—echoed by the Associated Press—Gramm claimed he sent Caton a check *before* signing a contract and *before* knowing what he was sending the check for. So which was it? An investment of $7,500 (for a college professor, no small sum) in a black hole or a genuine business deal that didn't work out? You figure it out.

Then Gramm huffed and puffed to deny allegations no one ever made. In a news release on May 19, Gramm denied he "was attempting to hide his involvement in the investment by issuing a check from his business partnership." But we never said he was. It was not the signature on the check, but the signature on the *contract* that would have formally sealed the relationship between Gramm and *Beauty Queens / White House Madness.* What Gramm did was to have the wife of a colleague sign an "Agreement of Limited Partnership" and an "Acknowledgment of Representations of Investor," obscuring his own link—and that of his partnership—to the movie. Gramm still hasn't explained why his name was not on these documents, which were mailed from his address.

Gramm's third tactic was to impugn the source. Gramm's response to TNR mentioned no "family grudge," but such a grudge later became a staple of his story. Gramm then called Caton a thief. To recap: Caton claims he contacted Gramm about director Mark Lester's decision to cancel *Beauty Queens* and produce in its place *White House Madness,* and that after the movie bombed, he sent Gramm $3,000 to defray his losses. Gramm now denies Caton ever told him that *Beauty Queens* had been canceled or was replaced by *White House Madness.* He says he believed the $15,000 "went into my brother-in-law's pocket." This is simply implausible. Gramm, known for being careful about money, invests $15,000 of which $7,500 belongs to a colleague and then simply forgets about it? (It's about as plausible as investing $15,000 in a project he knew nothing about.)

Gramm's final smear went one step further. On May 19, two days after the story broke, Gramm sent out a memo to the press saying that "Wendy's sister, Sharon, divorced Caton in 1975 after suffering a beating at his hands," implying that Caton's wife divorced him because he beat her. Caton has firmly denied this charge, and the evidence supports him. Caton himself sought the divorce and it was granted without being contested. According to Caton, he and his wife were still living together at the time of the divorce and only parted when he moved East. By their own admission, the Gramms received Caton several times since the divorce—an unlikely scenario if Caton had recently assaulted Wendy Gramm's sister. In short, the wife-beating story looks to us like pure character assassination; in any case, it has no bearing whatsoever on whether Caton's essential story is true.

Gramm's response to our article bears out its central contention. The point was not that Gramm was wrong to invest in low-life movies, nor even that he is a hypocrite. It was that he is profoundly amoral, committed only to his own political advancement, ruthless in getting his way and untrustworthy in accounting for his actions. Everything Gramm has done since confirms this analysis. He has a major character problem. Is he someone we should even consider electing to the presidency? •

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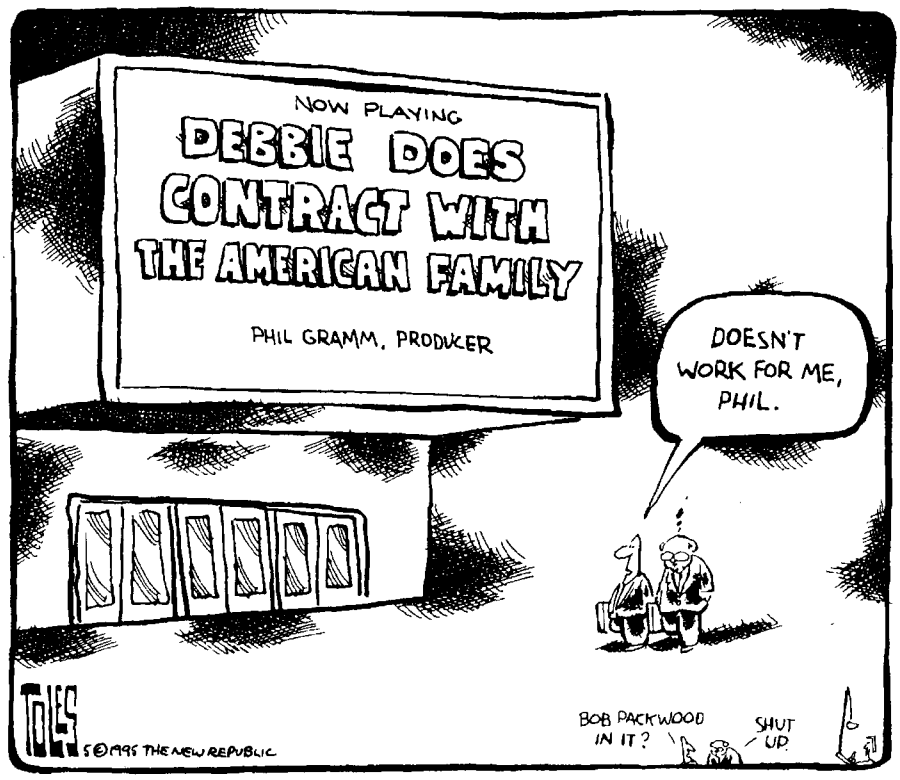
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: The Washington, D.C., police's toll-free crime-tip hotline was disconnected after the department failed to pay its bill.... Claremont, New Hampshire, farmer Shaun Hathaway remained unmoved by neighbors' pleas to cease his early morning firing of three cannons, and reiterated that they are the only way to keep raccoons out of his corn.... Lee Edward Boner was taken to an Oklahoma City mental health center after a Southwest Airlines flight during which he told a flight attendant he could open the plane's door in two kicks.... Teacher Pauline Williamson was suspended and a Brooklyn boy filed suit against Excelsior Seventh Day Adventist School when he was forced to wear a wig, bra and skirt after talking in class.... To prevent the smuggling of drugs, Minnesota's Stillwater Prison banned kissing.... Fifteen-year-old Jeffersonville High School student James Phillips launched a campaign against his Indiana school's Red Devil mascot because it "glorifies evil and promotes Satanism."... Etta Stephens sued Barnett Bank in Tampa, Florida, for a heart attack she suffered after receiving an incorrect statement saying her $20,000 account was empty.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DEBBIE DOES CONTRACT WITH THE AMERICAN FAMILY
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DOESN'T WORK FOR ME, PHIL.
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BOB PACKWOOD IN IT?
SHUT UP

IT WAS OK, YOU'RE OK:

Sacramento co-author of 'I'm OK—You're OK' dies

—*The Sacramento Bee,* May 6.

(Thanks to Sharon Harlan of Sacramento, California.)

THE REACTIONARIES: The Democratic response to the Republican budget proposals goes from bad to worse. The president will not propose an alternative deficit-cutting plan; oh, all right, he will; on third thought, he won't. Alice Rivlin says she's for more deficit-cutting, but not by 2002: it's an "arbitrary date." What *isn't* an arbitrary date, Alice? The president's strategy, it seems, is soothing farmers, scaring the elderly and generally reacting as an ally of the status quo. No doubt, smart short-term politics, but a mile away from what he was elected to do. The roots of the problem go back to the first year of the administration, when the 1993 budget fudge revealed that Clinton's draconian campaign rhetoric about the deficit was just one more insincere fob to the New Democrats. A year later, Clinton's boasts about reducing the deficit were clearly just another form of politics: they reflected no deeper grasp of why the deficit is the biggest threat to the middle class, to the dollar and to free trade. Now, Clinton's gambit is to appear simply as a reactionary liberal, with little vision as to how the government should slim down, and no conviction that the deficit is a mortal threat to this country's present and future economic health. It's not that there aren't Democratic voices out there with an alternative (see, for starters, "The Budget Inferno," by Steve Tidrick, TNR, May 29). It's just that the president and his advisers don't want to hear them.

LES WAS MORE: Washington has an even shorter memory than America, and it would be unjust for Les Aspin to be remembered as the man who couldn't manage the Pentagon. No, he was not a gifted manager. He was merely a gifted thinker. What he failed to master bureaucratically, he mastered intellectually. In the roiled final years of the cold war, Aspin emerged as one of the most sophisticated and responsible voices on national security. In the early 1980s, as a congressman and then as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, he recognized that developments in military technology, particularly in the quantity and the quality of the Soviet Union's missiles, demanded a fresh look at American strategy. Some of Aspin's conclusions landed him in hot water. The feisty thirty-something dove who made a name for himself in Congress in the early '70s by regularly

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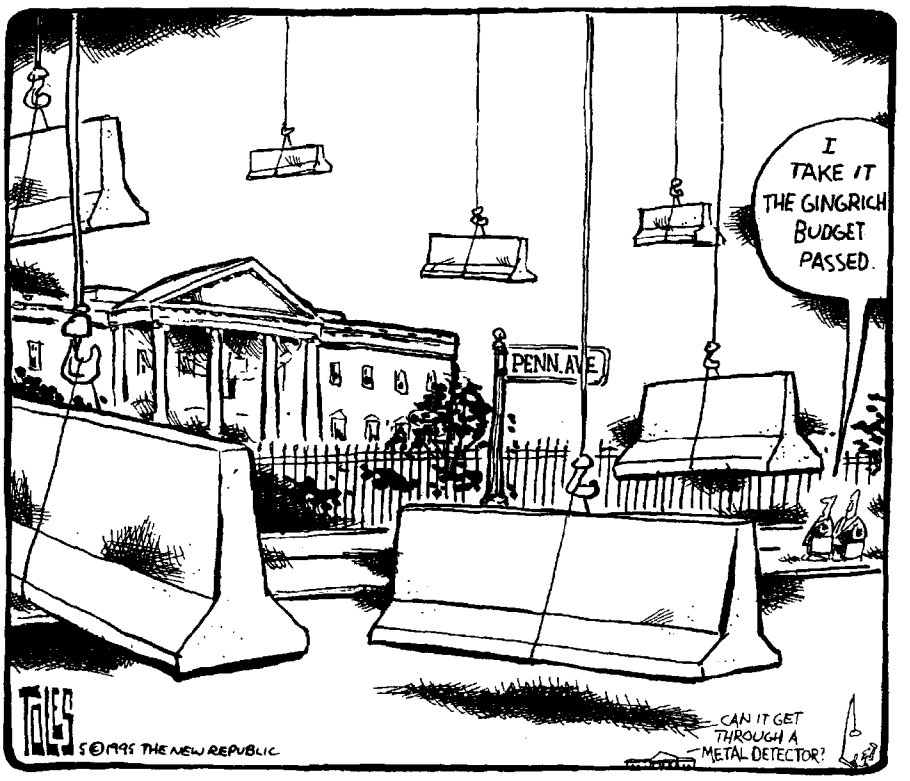
embarrassing the Pentagon for its profligacy startled, and greatly angered, his fellow Democrats when he supported the MX in the early '80s; and his support for the contras almost cost him his chairmanship. But finally Aspin was not a gang member. He was fervent in the cause of arms control and against the cause of SDI. He was a thorn in the side of Democratic isolationists and Republican isolationists. (He did not "misspeak," in 1993, about Bill Clinton's policy of inaction in Bosnia; he expressed a proper frustration with his own administration's inhibition about the use of force against a genocide.) In and out of the Pentagon, Aspin experienced the end of the cold war as a mandate; it was a time for rolled-up sleeves, for a new analysis. Analysis, for the gentleman from Wisconsin, was a calling, and an expression of citizenship. He was a genuinely undoctrinaire man genuinely consecrated to the security of his country; rumpled, sharp, distracted, restless, almost comically obsessed with policy; the nerd as hero. He died too young.



LOST IN SPACE: With a stamp of approval from Representative Robert Walker, chairman of the House Science Committee, federal funding for civilian science research—projects such as atom smashers, weather satellites and space probes—was included in the latest Republican round of budget cuts. "The American people informed us in November that they want our government to be accountable to us," wrote Walker in a stoic press release, adding that the science funding amounts to corporate welfare. "This budget is a history-making, revolutionary document which is written to save our children's future." Not exactly. Behind the scenes, Walker is supporting a bill to create a National Spaceport Agency. It would convert several defunct military bases, most of which happen to fall in Republican districts, such as Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, into ports for commercial space launchings, as well as subsidize corporate research. This is not only standard, home-district pork, but a classic example of corporate welfare. When Democrats on the Space Committee declined to support the billion-dollar international space station, Walker jumped on the chance to throw mud: "It is ironic that key Democrats on the Science Committee have chosen to back off on the president's highest space priority as a political issue," he fumed. Ironic indeed.

WATCHING IT DRY:

Vietnam Short Of Cement

—*The New York Times*, May 9.

(Thanks to Jack Miller of Minneapolis, Minnesota.)

POWER-COUPLE REDUX: The latest flare-up in the Washington power-couple problem occurred this week, and involved the columnist George Will. Will's wife, Mari Maseng Will, is a lobbyist for the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association: she's paid, essentially, to spin the Japanese auto industry to the media. Will's crime, apparently, was not to disclose this danger of pillow-talk spin in a recent column espousing the joys of Adam Smith. It doesn't take a sophisticated ethicist to see that the charge is a mite overblown; there's no evidence that Will became an ardent free trader because he married a Japanese lobbyist (come to think of it, since when were Japanese lobbyists synonymous with free trade?). It's more likely, in the Washington we know and love, that Will's marital choice was influenced by his politics. The deeper issue is the growing problem of power-couple career synergy. With the preponderance of two-career marriages, in an information economy that trades on access, there's a rising threat of old-fashioned nepotism. The old-boy network is fast becoming the double-date network. Most of this is unavoidable—and harmless. The boundaries of social and professional life are always porous; only now they include both sexes; and marriages, at least, are more public than many other, subtler ways of trading influence. But the flip side of this is surely that power-couples, especially those who are involved in matters of public trust, should be held responsible for fully disclosing their professional ties, and subjecting themselves to the kind of scrutiny George Will has just

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experienced. It may not be pleasant; it may not always be justified. But it's a small price to pay for women's emergence as real players in the same old, sleazy old, system.

POLLING NEWS:

Poll: GOP's on right budget track

—*USA Today*, May 16.

Poll Finds Disapproval Of GOP's Budget Plans

—*The Washington Post*, May 16.

(Thanks to Eron Shosteck of Washington, D.C.)

COURT WATCH

TERMINATED

By Jeffrey Rosen

The Supreme Court struck down congressional term limits this week; and the surprising part of the 5-4 decision was not the wooden majority opinion by John Paul Stevens but the elastic dissent by Clarence Thomas. For the justices and their clerks, of course, rhetorical excesses are one of the pleasures of writing dissents, and shouldn't always be taken seriously. But when four justices of the Supreme Court take it upon themselves to re-examine the basic principles of constitutional metaphysics, it seems fair to assume that they have considered some of the implications of the words issued in their name.

"Because the majority fundamentally misunderstands the notion of 'reserved' powers," Thomas declares grandly at the beginning of his dissent, "I start with some first principles." And what, precisely, are the first principles that Thomas, joined by Justices Antonin Scalia, William Rehnquist and Sandra Day O'Connor, came within one vote of resurrecting? "The ultimate source of the Constitution's authority is the consent of the people of each individual State, not the consent of the undifferentiated people of the Nation as a whole." Thomas's rhetoric, inadvertently or intentionally, is the rhetoric of Jefferson Davis and John Calhoun. Having rejected the constitutional legacy of the New Deal in the *Lopez* decision a few weeks ago, Thomas now seems inclined to question the legacy of Reconstruction as well.

Perhaps Thomas didn't really mean to reopen the Civil War; but his language was sufficiently careless to alarm Justice Anthony Kennedy, who emphasized in his concurrence that "it is well settled that the whole people of the United States asserted their political identity and unity of purpose when they created the federal system." But Kennedy, too, is overstating his case. In fact, the question of which apportionment of the people are sovereign—the people of each state or the people of the nation—was an open question at the Founding, and remained open until it was settled by General Grant's army. Both the Anti-Federalists of the 1780s and the Confederates of the 1860s took Thomas's position—that the people of each state were sovereign and could exercise whatever powers the federal Constitution didn't explicitly forbid.

Taken to its logical conclusion, the Thomas-Calhoun theory seems to imply a right of secession. If the people of Georgia were sovereign, they could judge for themselves whether the federal compact has been breached, and could withdraw from the Union (or nullify federal laws), even if a majority of the people of the United States disagreed with them. If, on the other hand, Lincoln was correct and the people of the United States as a whole were sovereign, then, as Calhoun conceded, "the claimed right for a State of defending her reserved powers against the General Government, would be an absurdity." But although Thomas's position may have been plausible before 1865, the sovereignty debate was resolved clearly and decisively when the South surrendered at Appomatox.

What's so peculiar about Thomas's explosive rhetoric is that he could have challenged Justice Stevens's mechanical opinion for the majority without revisiting the debate between Lincoln and Calhoun. As Thomas notes convincingly at the beginning of his dissent, Stevens's invocation of the right of the people "to choose whom they please to govern them" is a little hollow, given the fact that Court struck down twenty-three state laws passed by popular initiative. Thomas goes on, plausibly enough, to endorse the argument of Roderick Hills of the University of Michigan. The Constitution assigns to the "People of the several States" the right to elect congressional representatives; and Hills argued in his brief that the Arkansas plebiscite on term limits was itself a popular election in which the voters determined that they no longer wished to be represented by long-standing incumbents.

If Thomas had stopped here, his dissent would have been coherent, if not totally persuasive. (Is a vote on a term-limits initiative really like a vote in an ordinary election?) But Thomas goes much further. He is unable to take a principled populist position, because he is determined to include a gratuitous reference to the newly fashionable Tenth Amendment. ("The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.") Thomas rejects the majority's argument, which was also Chief Justice Joseph Story's argument in his mid-nineteenth-century *Commentaries*, that the state governments cannot "reserve," under the Tenth Amendment, any powers that they did not already possess before the Constitution was

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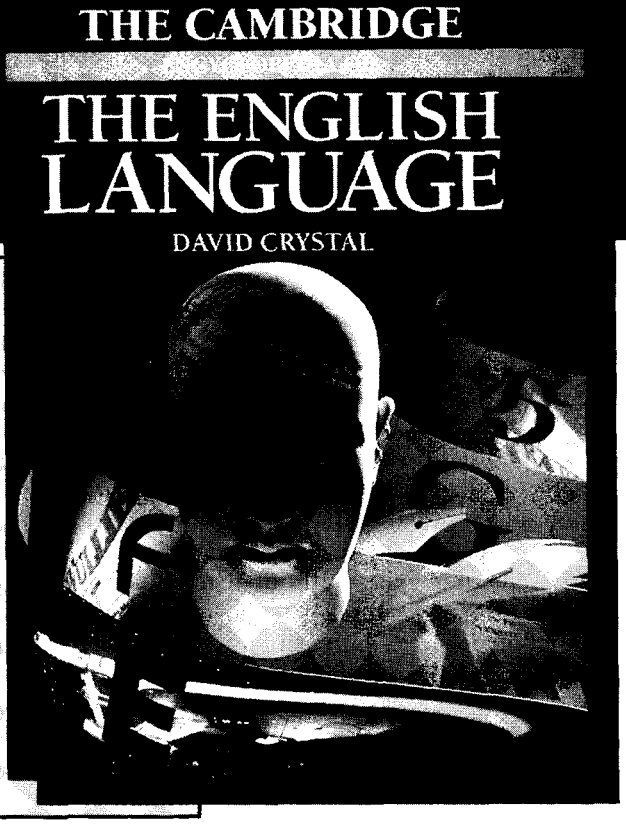

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adopted. This ignores, says Thomas, the fact that the Constitution derives its authority from the consent of the people of the states, not the state legislatures.

But Thomas then collapses the crucial distinction between state governments and state people. He insists that term limits are constitutional whether passed by state legislatures *or* by popular initiative. The concession reveals Thomas's rhetoric about popular sovereignty to be ultimately shallow, since he is willing to let state legislatures interpose themselves between the people of each state and their representatives in Congress. This is the position James Madison explicitly rejected when he insisted that the power to set electoral qualifications was not, under the U.S. Constitution, "subject to the legislative discretion of the states." Instead, the definition of electoral qualifications was "fixed by the state constitutions" and "not alterable by the state governments."

Although Thomas is arguing in the *Term Limits* case for judicial restraint, some of his rhetoric suggests an eagerness, in future cases, to interject the Court into the political process far more dramatically than it has ventured before. In an odd passage, he suggests that either the majority is wrong about the unconstitutionality of term limits, or else the electoral system that exists without term limits might be unconstitutional because of the overwhelming advantages that incumbents enjoy. "If it can be shown that nonminorities are at a significant disadvantage when they seek election in districts dominated by minority voters," Thomas asks, would the intentional creation of majority black districts "violate the Qualifications Clauses even if it were to survive scrutiny under the Fourteenth Amendment?" He is joking, presumably; but the rest of his opinion underscores the irony that the two leading neo-Calhounians in the country are now Clarence Thomas and Lani Guinier. Furthermore, Thomas has come close to suggesting, in other cases, that the intentional creation of majority black districts can never survive scrutiny under the Fourteenth Amendment. All this is to say that Thomas's devotion to state control over the federal election process will be tested in June when the conservative justices, perhaps joined by Justice Kennedy, will reveal whether or not they have the votes to strike down the Voting Rights Act itself.

The most sobering lesson of the *Term Limits* decision is to suggest how tendentious the conservative justices have become in their uses of constitutional history. Four members of the Rehnquist Court claim to be devoted to original understanding, but refuse to study any constitutional amendments that were ratified after Bull Run. Justice Kennedy suggests that the Fourteenth Amendment somehow encompasses a federal right to vote, even though most of the Reconstruction Republicans understood the amendment to be limited to civil rights, not political rights. And the hypocrisies converge in the Voting Rights cases where the conservatives, joined by Justice Kennedy, mysteriously rediscover the Fourteenth Amendment and invoke it to limit the power of Congress to draw race-conscious districts, even though the amendment, as originally understood, did not apply to districting at all.

In the wake of the *Term Limits* decision, it is now clear that conservatives on the Court and in Congress have no coherent theory of federalism to speak of. Since congressional Republicans are determined not to propose a constitutional amendment on term limits, the only solution, as Sanford Levinson of the University of Texas argues, is for the state legislatures to call constitutional conventions that will propose a term limits amendment on their own. If we are to have a constitutional moment, appropriately enough, it will have to come from the people themselves. •

NATIONAL INSECURITY

RABBLE ROUSING

By Charles Lane

No issue drives a wedge between America's elite and the American public like foreign aid. The policy mandarins like it. The public hates it. According to a recent poll sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, the average American is five times more hostile to economic aid for foreign countries than the "leaders"—a sample drawn from Congress, the executive branch, the media and academia. The citizenry wants to reduce aid to everyone, including the two biggest recipients, Israel and Egypt (major no-nos in Washington). The policy makers would trim funds for those two, but send the savings to Eastern Europe, Africa and Russia.

In his latest demonstration of political vision, however, Bill Clinton is throwing in his lot with the mandarins. He has threatened to veto the Republican Congress's proposals for major cuts in foreign aid. Dire harrumphing can be heard from every corner of the administration. "The most isolationist bill" since V-E Day, the president intones. The GOP bill could mean war, Defense Secretary William Perry and Joint Chiefs Chairman General John Shalikashvili warn in a *USA Today* op-ed: "This portion of the budget finances our diplomacy, and when diplomacy fails, conflict often results." (The administration's all-out public relations campaign to save foreign aid seemingly takes precedence over the traditional, and wise, practice of keeping active-duty military officers out of the civilian political debate.) Though African governments have been some of the most egregiously corrupt managers of foreign assistance, proposed cuts in aid to Africa are "racist," according to Randall Robinson. Frank Lostumbo of the National Council for International Health claims that cutting immunization in developing

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nations could inundate America with disease.

Yes, the administration has a point. Some foreign aid that supports major, specific interests (Russian denuclearization, Middle East peace, the operations of the United Nations) should be protected. The Republican bills, as now written, would tie the president's hands in foreign policy areas as diverse as the recognition of Vietnam (not until they find every last MIA) and dealing with Cuban rafters (no funds for the new policy of repatriation). For years, it was the Democrats in Congress who grandstanded and "micro-managed" Republican presidents on foreign policy. Now the roles have been reversed.

Still, at the risk of a few lunches at the Council on Foreign Relations, it's clear to me that the Republicans are not simply engaging in demagoguery. The best sign of this is the hyperbole, even desperation, of the arguments being marshalled by the defenders of foreign aid. The president notes a recent poll showing Americans believe that 18 percent of the federal budget goes to foreign aid, and want to cut that "share" to 8 percent. The actual current figure is only 1 percent. So, the president argues, there's much greater support for foreign aid than commonly supposed. In fact, the poll could just as easily be interpreted as meaning that, whatever we actually do spend on foreign aid, the public wants to cut it by more than half.

For voters, foreign aid is a matter not of numbers but of "values." The elites stubbornly fail to grasp this distinction. An analogy is welfare. There, too, the public holds a wildly exaggerated view of how much a relatively inexpensive program costs. Why? Because most people see no link between the sums being spent on aid to the poor (plus the attendant bureaucracy) and any actual reduction in poverty. To many people, welfare seems to reward, and thus perpetuate, bad economic habits that create dependency in the first place.

This view, while crude, is hardly entirely wrong. And it often applies to the effects of foreign aid as well. The $118 billion spent by the Agency for International Development (AID) since 1961 has played at most a minor role in the success of those once-poor countries that are now doing well. Far from serving as an "investment" in preventing overseas crises (AID Director J. Brian Atwood's phrase), billions in American and "multilateral" dollars have propped up bad governments whose own reluctance to adopt democratic and free-market policies is the main cause of their countries' misery. Yugoslavia, a major International Monetary Fund customer before its break-up, is one example. Somalia, which got hundreds of millions of American aid dollars in the '70s and '80s, is another. Yet a third is chaotic Zaire, whose dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, has personally stolen billions of foreign aid. Even in a democracy such as Israel, American aid retarded free enterprise by supporting subsidies and monopolies for favored constituencies.

Just as the array of government "welfare" benefits is much wider than the core program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, so foreign aid, in the broadest sense, is greater than the elites tend to acknowledge. "Official development assistance," defined as grants and loans intended to "further human welfare," amounted to a mere $11 billion in 1991. But the costs of international peace keeping, broadcasting and military aid raise the figure closer to $19 billion. That's no small change. And how should we count the $5 billion we still spend to keep troops in Europe?

Then come agricultural credit guarantees, under which we're still paying for loans on which Saddam Hussein's Iraq defaulted; protectionist schemes such as the sugar quota; and covert assistance from the CIA. Throw in, for good measure, the $20 billion loan guarantee to Mexico. While not a cash transfer, it does expose the taxpayers to the risk of large outlays later on. What exactly is the case for keeping the U.S. Institute for Peace, an excellent but not vital Washington think tank that was established as a retirement tribute to West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph? Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty played important roles in the cold war but, alas, they play marginal roles now.

To his credit, Atwood began promoting reform even before the Republicans came in. But his agency is going to be shrunk and folded into the State Department under the Republican bills, and it probably should be—even if, for some reason, *The Washington Post* editorial page doesn't think Congress should be allowed to engage in "enforced reorganization" of the federal government. Much of AID's money still goes to American consultants for "feasibility studies" and the like, not to needy foreigners. Its operating expenses last year were half a billion dollars, about three times what the agency spent on disaster aid. The AID inspector general spent another $40 million to monitor waste and fraud. According to the Congressional Budget Office, AID runs programs in thirty-two middle-income countries that have outgrown foreign aid; these could be eliminated at a savings of $400 million per year.

On foreign aid, the American public is neither brainless nor heartless. Just as most polls show Americans balking at the most radical right-wing plans for welfare reform, so most Americans favor offering humanitarian relief when famine and disease suddenly strike people in poor countries abroad. For the most part, though, the world has changed dramatically since the 1950s, when today's notions about government-to-government aid originated. We now know that free markets and free trade—leavened by relatively modest efforts at education, public health and technical assistance—are the best ways to promote economic development. Non-governmental aid organizations are often more sophisticated at providing these services than governments are.

Foreign aid isn't entirely obsolete, but its advocates

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will have to be more tough-minded in the future if aid is to survive at all. Far from undermining America's role in the world, dropping the least defensible aid programs will probably enhance the popular legitimacy of the remaining missions we do undertake. Clinton, in this sense, has it exactly the wrong way around. Complacency about ideas and agencies that have clearly passed their prime is the real menace to a politically sustainable American internationalism. •

Phil's down, Gingrich is up.

GRAMM V. NEWT

By Fred Barnes

Last February, after Jack Kemp dropped out of the Republican presidential race, two of his advisers, David Smick and Jeffrey Bell, devised a plan for simultaneously keeping Kemp in the national spotlight and promoting supply-side economics. Kemp would head a national commission to develop a new tax reform strategy for Republicans. The question was who among congressional Republicans in power in Washington would be recruited to help Kemp. Through an intermediary, Smick got the proposal to Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, once the GOP's leading enemy of supply-side tax cuts. Dole loved the idea, recognizing it might aid his presidential candidacy, even prompt a Kemp endorsement. Soon he and Kemp held a press conference to announce the commission. Dole and House Speaker Newt Gingrich later planned to disclose the commission's members, including former South Carolina Governor Carroll Campbell.

Dole's gain was Phil Gramm's loss, another failure in the Texas senator's bid to attract conservative constituencies to his presidential campaign. That Gramm wasn't appointed to the commission was no surprise; the appointees are not members of Congress. But his name never came up at all as Kemp, Smick and Bell considered potential allies to advance their tax-cutting agenda. For supply-siders, a small but influential segment of the GOP coalition, an old nemesis like Dole is preferable to Gramm, and not just because Dole is Senate Republican leader either. Gramm simply is not on their wavelength. When Kemp was spreading the tax-cut message among Republicans in the late 1970s, Gramm was still a Democrat. And when Gramm backed President Reagan's supply-side tax cut in 1981, he touted it as a way "to starve the spending." Kemp favored the cut to spur economic growth, a big difference. Even today, Gramm rejects "dynamic scoring" of tax cuts—the budgetary gambit that claims tax cuts give you revenue gains. The more spending cuts, the better, he thinks. This is not music to conservative ears. "Kemp is the New Testament," says Smick. "Gramm is the Old Testament."

As recently as last winter, Gramm was viewed in the political community as likely to lock up conservative support across the board: budget cutters, supply-siders, neo-cons, social conservatives, libertarians. He'd emerge, much as Ronald Reagan did in 1980, as the bridge over conservative factions. Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council introduced Gramm in February to a Washington gathering of social conservatives this way: "Ladies and gentlemen, this man has the best opportunity of anyone to inherit the Reagan mantle." Since then, Gramm has squandered the opportunity. The fallout from this is twofold. One, Dole has been able to generate far more support among conservatives than expected, especially among social conservatives thrilled by his bashing of Hollywood and the entertainment industry. Two, the drumbeat for Gingrich to run for the GOP presidential nomination has grown louder and louder. Had Gramm clicked with conservatives, the Gingrich boomlet would never have materialized.

Why hasn't Gramm clicked? Not for lack of tying himself to Reagan. Gramm routinely describes himself as a "foot soldier in the Reagan revolution." As president, he says, "I want to finish the revolution." At a May 17 dinner honoring Reagan, sponsored by *The American Spectator*, Gramm recalled that tears came to his eyes when he listened to Reagan's inaugural address in 1981. He said he didn't believe a president "who thought exactly as I did" would ever be elected. Reagan still inspires him, Gramm said. "While Ronald Reagan's memory of us may be fading, our memory of Ronald Reagan will never fade."

Gramm is no Reagan, especially in personality. He doesn't schmooze or flatter easily. "He's a pretty proud man," says Bill Bennett, who runs Empower America, the GOP think tank. "I'm a doer, not a sayer," Gramm told me. Reagan had the ability to make strategic alliances with leaders of conservative factions, then to sit back and let them bring their followers along. "In Reagan's army, he was the general but there were also a lot of captains, majors and colonels," says a Gramm adviser. "With Gramm, he's the general and everyone else is a private." The result is that the Gramm campaign "is running like a dry creek," as Paul Weyrich, an influential social conservative, puts it. Though close to Gramm ideologically, Weyrich has only criticism for Gramm's presidential try.

With supply-siders, the problem is that Gramm isn't one. Smick, who has endorsed Dole, says Gramm still sounds like a right-wing Democrat. The Democratic Party lived too high on the hog with lavish government programs and now it—and the country—must pay the penalty. That's the Gramm message, according to Smick. Gramm does have some supply-side backers: Arthur Laffer, Lewis Lehrman and Dusty Rhodes, the publisher of *National Review*. That's not many, but it may be more than the number of prominent social conserva-

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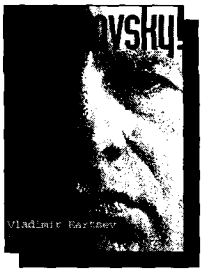

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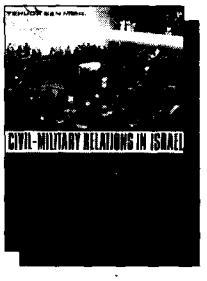

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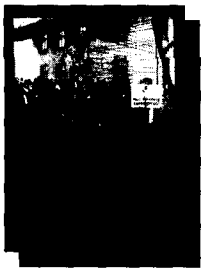

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tives for Gramm. When the Council on National Policy, an umbrella group for social conservatives, gathered in Washington in mid-May, Gramm dispatched Republican Senator Bob Smith to speak on his behalf. Smith was pummeled with hostile questions. He was taken aback. "They don't want to be hostile," Weyrich told him later. "They feel Gramm's rejected them" by ignoring their issues (abortion, moral decline, school prayer, etc.). As Smith and Weyrich spoke, Phyllis Schlafly wandered by and added more criticism of Gramm. And she'd earlier hoped to endorse Gramm, she said.

Even before the debacle at the Council on National Policy, Gramm had moved to shore up support among the Christian right, pro-family groups and pro-lifers. They're the largest segment of the Republican Party still up for grabs in the presidential race. For advice, Gramm turned to Bennett, among others, who told him: "Stand up and be counted. Be your own man. Tell those carping at you to go fly a kite. You don't have to be president. Don't kowtow to those guys." Gramm didn't kowtow, but he did begin mentioning social issues more and keeping in contact with people like Gary Bauer. He put enormous effort into a commencement address May 6 at Liberty University, Jerry Falwell's school. The speech was drafted by John McConnell, Dan Quayle's speechwriter, and vetted by Bauer and others. Bauer got faxes of four different versions of the speech, made editorial comments and was surprised when some were incorporated.

PHIL GRAMM BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The speech focused on moral issues, but on Gramm's terms. What is causing a decline in values? Too much government, he said. "Is our crisis an economic crisis or a moral crisis?" he asked. "In my opinion, it is both. And both ... have their roots in the explosion of a government that taxes and squanders the fruits of our labor and has replaced individual duties and responsibilities with unearned benefits and entitlements." If the "corrosive influence of government" is removed, Gramm said, it "will make a revival of American values possible." He dwelt on abortion: "Let us work toward the day when every unborn child is welcomed into life and loved when they get here." The speech got a warm response, including a letter extolling it from James Dobson of Focus on the Family, with whom Gramm had had chilly relations. Gramm's overtures to social conservatives paid off when TNR disclosed Gramm had invested in a racy soft-core movie. Gramm called Bauer for support and got it. "The movie thing would have been devastating eight weeks earlier," Bauer said. "It would have been the nail in the coffin for Gramm."

Absent Gramm's troubles, Newt Gingrich would be plotting the third and fourth 100 days for congressional Republicans. As it is, he's enthralled with the idea of running for president. The conventional wisdom in Washington is that it's a passing fancy for Gingrich, that he won't run. Maybe. But he's sure going to make a stir. In June, his so-called vacation in New Hampshire will be a whirlwind tour of political events in that key primary state. Then, he'll embark on a mammoth book tour, a thirty-six-city swing this summer to tout *To Renew America*. The book reads like a presidential campaign document, according to those who've read parts.

Gingrich has a strategy: wait and see. He expects to win the budget battle this summer with President Clinton. He also believes Dole will screw up egregiously at some point. He thinks Gramm is already a goner. If all that occurs, Gingrich figures he'll be perfectly situated to jump start a presidential campaign in the early fall. He'll be the most loved Republican in the land.

Still, practically everyone outside his inner circle thinks he won't run. My guess is they're right. And when Gingrich announces his intention to stay out of the race, that will be a crucial moment for Gramm. He'll have an opening to gobble up all the conservative support, including Bill Bennett, a passel of social conservatives and perhaps a supply-sider or two pleased with Gramm's fight to add a tax cut to the Senate budget resolution.

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There's bound to be a two-person race for the nomination, Dole against somebody. Gramm is the most likely. He may not beat Dole, but his logic is at least plausible. "The Republican Party is like a chicken," he says. "It has a huge right wing and a little shriveled left wing." So whoever wins the right, wins the nomination. "The guys who could have hurt me didn't run—Kemp, Cheney, Quayle." With Gingrich gone, too, that leaves Dole. "He's got name ID but no message. I've got a message but no name ID. Ninety-five percent of the time, the person with a message and no name ID wins." •

ON THE HILL

JAM SESSION

By Weston Kosova

It was a policy wonk's dream come true: a face-to-face jam session with Newt Gingrich himself. Early last March, the House speaker convened a meeting with higher-ups from the country's right-leaning think tanks. The topic: post-contract America. The Heritage Foundation's Kate O'Beirne, the American Enterprise Institute's Chris DeMuth, Hudson Institute's Leslie Lenkowsky, William Kristol of the Project for the Republican Future and emissaries from about thirty others, leather binders jammed tight with talking points and background briefings, filed into the speaker's office just off the House floor. But Gingrich, it turned out, had a different topic in mind. It wasn't the country's future he wanted to discuss, but his own.

"After a few minutes of pleasantries, he went into a rant," says one participant. "He started talking about how his ability to get his agenda done depends on whether the ethics charges against him take hold. He was clearly worried." Gingrich went on for nearly half an hour, detailing how House Democrats, led by Minority Whip David Bonior, are out to get him. At last, Gingrich got to the point: "He wanted us to think of ways to deal with the allegations," another witness says. "He urged us to help him any way we could." Stunned, they filed out of the room. "It was strange, his request, given who we were," says a participant. "The thing we all took away from the meeting was how obsessed he is with his ethics problems. He thinks they are going to be used to destroy him."

Outwardly, Gingrich acts as if he hasn't given a second thought to the series of ethics complaints against him. He accuses the two men leading the charges, Bonior and former Representative Ben Jones, Gingrich's opponent in the last congressional election, of "misusing the ethics system in a deliberate, vicious and vindictive way." But in private, Gingrich is, as the meeting suggests, consumed. As the ethics complaints pile up, it's tempting for Democrats to think that somewhere in all of this there's a smoking gun, one irrefutable charge that will bring Gingrich down. Unfortunately, there isn't. As political fodder, anyway, the charges are pretty mundane. Mostly, they amount to minor transgressions of the tax code or petty violations of House rules.

Take, for example, the most serious of the complaints: that Gingrich violated the tax-exempt status of his TV college course, "Renewing American Civilization." Bonior and Jones claim that the Progress and Freedom Foundation, which organized and raised corporate donations for the course, is a front operation for Gingrich's political agenda and the college course merely a pitch for the GOP. (Tax laws prohibit nonprofit groups from engaging in political activities.)

They're almost certainly right. If, as Gingrich protests, his ties to the foundation are coincidental, it's one hell of a coincidence. The foundation has two offices: one in Washington, the other in Marietta, Georgia, the heart of Gingrich's district. The group's president, Jeffrey Eisenach, is a former head of GOPAC, Gingrich's political action committee, and a longtime sidekick. Almost all of the foundation's employees are former GOPAC staffers or Gingrich acolytes. What's more, many of the donors listed on Progress and Freedom's tally sheet also appear on GOPAC's rolls of contributors. But the connections between GOPAC and the foundation, though revealing, are also irrelevant. Gingrich may be dissembling about his ties to the group, but it's still not illegal to contribute both to GOPAC and Progress and Freedom.

Gingrich is on shakier ground with his claim that his college course isn't political. He points out that the words "Democrat" or "Republican" are never mentioned in his lectures, which he says were in no way intended to push the GOP. Even if this piece of casuistry were convincing, it's contradicted by Gingrich's own promotional material for the course. Last year, he sent a letter to more than 1,000 chapters of College Republicans, urging them to avoid complacency in their fight against the Clinton administration by enrolling in his course.

So let's assume the charges are true. At worst, Gingrich and the foundation abused the tax-exempt status by using it to fund a political enterprise. But is a tax-code violation the same as an ethics violation? After all, Gingrich didn't make money on the venture. None of the cash was spirited to his campaign. Nor did money flow into GOPAC's vault. If he trumped the tax laws, he should be fined and made to pay back taxes, like any other tax cheat. That's a matter not for the Ethics Committee, but the IRS. After nearly a year of publicity, it has yet to show any interest in going after him.

Indeed, among the significant complaints against Gingrich, only two qualify as potential violations specifically

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of House rules. The first is Gingrich's relationship with Rupert Murdoch. Gingrich alleges he didn't know Murdoch (who has tens of millions riding on this year's rewrite of telecommunications laws) owned HarperCollins when he took the $4.5 million book advance. Again, not a convincing explanation. Unfortunately for Bonior, there's not much punch left to the charges. Even if the committee eventually finds him guilty, Gingrich can point out that he did, after all, return the money. That leaves another charge: that Gingrich broke rules by accepting twenty hours of free TV time from a cable company, Jones Intercable Inc., which televised his class. As violations go, it's not exactly a career wrecker, especially since Gingrich has since stopped teaching the course.

The Democrats aren't just tackling Gingrich on significant breaches, however. They're going for cumulative damage, attempting to swamp Gingrich with so many charges that the particulars become irrelevant. Bonior wails to the Ethics Committee every month or so, seeking to inflate every skirted procedure and broken rule into a full-blown scandal. (He recently heaped yet another charge on the pile, demanding an inquiry because Gingrich plugged his college class on the House floor.) Of course, Gingrich himself did precisely the same thing in his relentless, and ultimately successful, crusade against Speaker Jim Wright in 1989. Except that when it comes to laying careers to waste, Bonior is no Gingrich. Gingrich made it his life's work to destroy Wright; Bonior is content to proclaim a new "violation" now and then, along with a nasty press release. It's hard to fault the Democrats for attempting to hold Gingrich publicly accountable for flouting House rules. But in the absence of a credible Democratic response to his legislative agenda, the ethics attack is backfiring. Instead of making Gingrich look criminal, it makes Bonior look petty. •

A look inside the radical Islamist network.

THE OTHER FUNDAMENTALISTS

By Steven Emerson

We know, after the Oklahoma City bombing, that terrorism in the United States can take many forms, domestic and foreign, populist and insurrectionist, from those with bizarre domestic grudges to those with radical foreign agendas. The growing awareness of this threat is part of what motivated the closing of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House last week. Until Oklahoma City, the consensus in the FBI was that, of the various extremist groups in the United States, it was radical Islamist groups that most gravely threaten American security. And for all the new evidence of domestic terrorism, that judgment remains the same. Over the past year alone, the FBI has created dozens of special units around the country—with hundreds of agents and analysts—whose tasks include tracking these radical Islamist groups.

A two-year investigation I recently concluded helps show why the government is so concerned. The investigation—which involved hundreds of interviews with moderate and militant Islamist officials and with law enforcement and intelligence officials, as well as the acquisition of more than 150,000 documents, publications and recordings produced by radical Islamist groups—revealed that these groups have established elaborate political, financial and, in some cases, operational infrastructures in the United States. Because of the scope of this movement (it ranges from New York to Oklahoma to California), its bellicose rhetoric (it calls for a holy war or "jihad" against the U.S. and other governments) and its advocacy of terror to achieve its ends (it trains recruits in the use of car bombs), it's no wonder the FBI has made this network a top priority.

Given the FBI's limitations, however, both in resources and in legal authority to investigate groups that define themselves as religious, it could be a while before the bureau gets the upper hand. "It took the bureau more than ten years before it could infiltrate the Mafia, learn the language, recruit Sicilians," says Don Lavey, a former FBI official who served as head of Interpol's counter-terrorism branch. "But this time, the threat is much greater and the bureau's resources incredibly more limited."

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the U.S., and the vast majority of Muslims in America are peaceful and law-abiding and do not condone violence. But in recent years an extremist fringe of militant Islamism has taken root here. To avoid raising suspicion and to take advantage of civil liberties protections, these militant

STEVEN EMERSON, executive producer of the PBS documentary *Jihad in America*, is completing a book on radical Islamist networks.

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groups often reconstitute themselves here as "research," "charitable" or "civil rights" institutions. Ahmed Said Nasr, an Egyptian journalist and former diplomat based in Washington, has studied militant Islamist groups in the United States. "During the past several years, there has been not only a proliferation of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the United States," says Nasr, "but they have carried out a major deception to the American public by masquerading as charities and religious or educational organizations. In the West, you think of schools or religious institutions as totally innocent because of your tradition of separation of church and state. But for the Islamic fundamentalist movement there is no separation of church and state."

Oliver B. Revell, a former senior FBI official in charge of counter-terrorist and counter-intelligence investigations, puts the objectives of these groups in no uncertain terms. "They are ultimately committed to waging holy war, both in the Middle East and the world at large against all of their opposition," he says. "And that means us." Seif Ashmawi, the Egyptian-born American-based publisher of a bilingual newspaper called *The Voice of Peace*, concurs. "The aim of these groups," Ashmawi says, "is the same as their aim in the Middle East: to build and expand their radical religious-political empire and eliminate or discredit all their enemies, particularly Muslims like myself who don't agree with radical fundamentalists' claim to represent Islam."

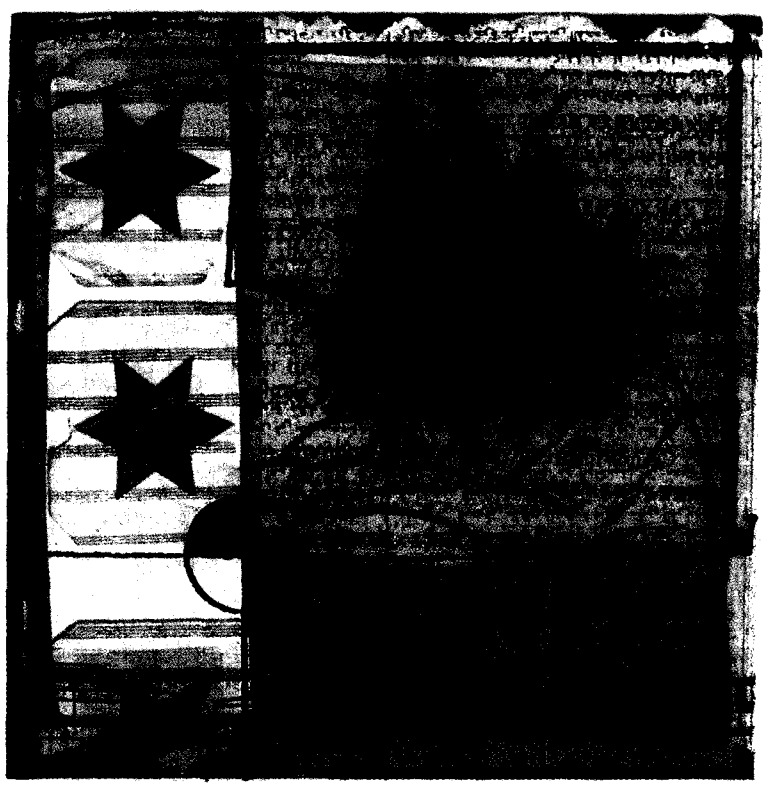

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Although there is no evidence that these myriad Islamist groups are centrally coordinated, it does appear that they collaborate and cross-fertilize. Evidence collected by federal investigators in the cases related to the February 26, 1993, World Trade Center bombing, for example, shows that leaders or representatives of at least five different groups—including the Palestinian-based Islamic Jihad, Hamas, the Sudanese National Islamic Front, the Pakistan-based al-Fuqrah (a black Islamist group) and groups funded by Persian Gulf donors—were involved in the plot. Sudanese diplomats affiliated with the National Islamic Front aided conspirators with access and credentials. In addition, Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman, the blind Egyptian cleric accused of being the spiritual ringleader of the World Trade Center conspiracy, had been hosted or sponsored in the U.S. by at least half a dozen mosques and innocent-sounding Islamist "charitable" and "religious" organizations. Many of these groups are willing to work together in diaspora because they feel they are surrounded by a common enemy: Westerners and their values.

Perhaps the best places to observe what brings these groups together are the Islamist conventions, held annually, often in the bland hotels and convention centers of Midwestern cities. Among the best-attended are those sponsored by the Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA). Founded in 1974 and headquartered in Plainfield, Indiana, MAYA has evolved into an umbrella organization for militant Islamist groups around the world. Its influence can be seen in the impressive parade of top Islamist militants who have addressed past conventions. They include Rachid al-Ghannouchi, head of the militant Tunisian al-Nahda movement (who was sentenced to death in absentia for his role in deadly terrorist attacks in Tunisia but now lives under political asylum in Britain); Mustapha Mash'hur, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood deputy supreme guide; Musa Abu Marzuk, the head of Hamas's political committee, who lived in the U.S. from 1973 to 1993; Yusef al-Qaradhawi, an Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood cleric based in Qatar; Ahmad al-Qattan, a Hamas leader based in Kuwait; Sheik Ahmad Nofal, a recruiter of Hamas terrorists in Jordan; and Ibrahim Gousheh, Hamas's spokesman in Jordan.

MAYA, like its parent organization, Muslim Brotherhood, embraces the belief that Western, particularly American society, is morally corrupt, intrinsically anti-Islamic and evil. "In the heart of America, in the depths of corruption and ruin and moral deprivation, an elite of Muslim youth is holding fast to the teachings of Allah," states the preface to MAYA's "Constitution," which is printed in Arabic and distributed at its conventions. A companion publication, "Guide for the Muslim Family in America," explains: "Western civilization is based upon the separation of religion from life.... Islamic civilization is based upon principles fundamentally opposed to those of Western civilization."

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

"... Damn Lies and [College] Statistics"

Do colleges lie in order to attract students? That's what a *Wall Street Journal* story says although it puts the case more politely: "Colleges Inflate SATs and Graduation Rates in Popular Guidebooks: Schools Say They Must Fib to *U.S. News* and Others to Compete Effectively" (April 5, 1995).

According to the *Journal* story, some colleges are giving inaccurate data to the college guides that many students and parents use in deciding where to apply. For example, reporter Steve Stecklow found that Northeastern University in Boston does not count the SAT scores of international and remedial students even though they make up approximately 20 percent of first-year students. This adds about 50 points to the average SAT score for the freshman class and makes the school look more selective than it really is. New York University simply leaves out the SAT scores for "economically disadvantaged students in a special state-sponsored program." And for a number of years, New College of the University of Florida lopped off the bottom 6 percent of SAT scores. The result: some very impressive SAT scores, like the 1296 average reported for the freshman class in 1994.

The colleges perceived the issue to be one of marketing rather than academic excellence.

Improving on the data does not stop with SAT scores. The *Wall Street Journal* also found that colleges lie about other common indicators of quality like the percentage of applicants they admit, the percentage of freshmen in the top 10 percent of their high school class and the percentage of students who stay on to graduate.

Why would colleges do this? It's simple. They are in a competition for students. To be successful, College A has to convince a lot of kids that it is a more desirable place to go than College B. The lists of "best" colleges offered by college guides, like the one that appears in *U.S. News and World Report,* have a great deal of influence with prospective applicants and their parents. If you're a little-known college, just getting into one of these guides could substantially boost your number of students applying for admission.

But well-known colleges also worry about where college guides will rank them from year to year. As a former dean of admissions from Colgate University explains, "When the American public...says you're not in the top 20 and they're going to make their decision based on that, it puts incredible pressure on you to have the right-looking numbers." The *Journal* found that even Harvard University reported a different—and slightly higher—range of SAT scores to the *U.S. News and World Report* college guide than showed up on a Moody's credit report for the university.

People commenting on this story tend to call it a reflection of the terrible state of ethics in higher education—and our society generally. But there's another angle.

Voucher supporters insist that competition is the best way to improve the quality of public education in the K-12 years. They say that if parents are given public money and allowed to decide among competing schools, both private and public, schools will be forced to raise student achievement in order to survive. The *Wall Street Journal* article tells another story. These colleges did not compete by offering students a better education. They perceived the issue to be one of marketing rather than academic excellence, and they competed by trying to make themselves look better than they were. Does anybody really think that competing K-12 schools would do things any differently?

K-12 schools would be under the same kind of pressure to attract students that colleges are. If anything, it would be more severe because few have the endowments or alumni backing that many colleges have. There would be glossy brochures hyping school facilities and showing pictures of smiling students. And there would undoubtedly be school guides to help students and parents compare schools. The guides would be open to the same kind of abuse as college guides so we could expect to see exaggerated claims about student SAT scores and the top-level colleges and graduate schools to which kids were admitted. What about a monitoring agency to protect the public from false advertising? That would be a natural function for the U.S. Department of Education, but the very people who are talking up vouchers are also saying the education department should be eliminated.

Perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised by the *Wall Street Journal* article. Though market competition can lead to better products, often it just produces better ads. But the story should make us skeptical about claims by voucher supporters that competition is the answer to our problems with student achievement. Running a good marketing campaign may be a challenge, but it's a lot easier than running a good school.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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MAYA's conferences serve several purposes. They help conservative Muslims fight the trend toward assimilation in the secular culture of the United States. They rally American Muslims in support of various militant Islamist causes. They showcase and promote Islamist charities that fund militant movements abroad. They offer a pretext for some of the world's most notorious militant Islamist leaders to come to the United States and get together under the same roof, where, according to law enforcement officials, in addition to addressing Muslim Americans, they divide monies raised through charities and coordinate operations behind closed doors. Finally, the conferences provide militant organizations with a cover to observe and recruit operatives in the U.S. for terrorist activities. A Chicago-based Palestinian-American who was convicted of abetting terrorist acts admitted to Israeli authorities, for example, that he had helped to train Hamas recruits at a MAYA convention.

At the most recent MAYA conference, held at a Hyatt hotel in Chicago in December, 5,000 people heard speech after speech asserting that Muslims around the globe were under bitter attack. The attendees were told that, as the vanguard of the Muslim Ummah (or "nation"), they were required to reclaim Islam's lost glory. In addition to a few non-political sermons, one could also hear vehement denunciations of Israel and the PLO-Israeli accords, describing them as modern-day equivalents of the anti-Muslim Crusades. Greeting the conventioneers was the headline of MAYA's Arabic-language newspaper: "JIHAD IN AMERICA: THE CRUSADES CONTINUE!"—a reference to a film I produced for PBS last year on militant Islamist groups in the U.S.

Men and women, most dressed in traditional scarves, were segregated in accordance with Islamic law, though in the halls and elevators, the sexes mixed. Perhaps half of the conference-goers were younger than 20. On a floor below the conference rooms was a bazaar, set up wall-to-wall with bookstalls, tables and stands selling delicacies, children's books, religious texts, baseball hats and T-shirts embroidered with slogans like "ISLAM IS THE SOLUTION." At other stalls, relief organizations collected donations for the Muslim victims of "genocide," the "crusades" and other forms of repression in Palestine, Bosnia, the Philippines, Egypt, Algeria and elsewhere. The makeshift marketplace was also well-stocked with books on Jews, including several editions of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and titles such as *Freemasons' and Christians' Conspiracy Against Islam, The Myth of Jesus Christ, The Jews Are Coming, Islam and Jewish Conspiracies* and *The Dangers of Jewish Existence to the Islamic Ummah.* At the Islamic Association for Palestine table—one of the largest—books and videos lauding Hamas were in plentiful supply. One such book was dedicated to the martyrdom of Imad Aqel, a legendary Hamas terrorist who had personally killed Jews and fellow Palestinians deemed to be "collaborators" before being shot to death in a gun battle with Israeli soldiers in 1993.

Nearby, at a stand soliciting donations for the imprisoned Sheik Abdul Rahman, a young man handed out a brochure called "U.S. War on Islam and Its Scholars," which explained that the sheik's indictment was "a prelude for a U.S. government campaign against all Muslim activists" and "proof that Islam in America is targeted by the U.S. government."

Among this year's more popular lecturers was the bearded, avuncular-looking Bassam al-Amoush, a member of the Islamic coalition in the Jordanian parliament, who boasted of how his party boycotted President Bill Clinton's address to that body. "Somebody approached me at the mosque [in Amman] and asked me, 'If I see a Jew in the street, should I kill him?' " al-Amoush said, putting on a dumbfounded face. " 'Don't ask me,' I said to him. 'After you kill him, come and tell me.' " The crowd roared with laughter. "What do you want from me, a fatwa [religious ruling]? Really, a good deed does not require one."

Minutes later, a message was handed to the master of ceremonies, who read it aloud. A hush fell over the conference room as he announced: "We have very good news. There was an attack on a bus in Jerusalem, perpetrated by a Palestinian policeman. Nineteen were wounded and three were killed. Hamas has taken responsibility for the act." (This was on December 26, when a Hamas suicide bomber blew up a bus in downtown Jerusalem. It was later revealed that only the bomber died; twelve Israelis were wounded.) The crowd responded with shouts of "Allahu Akbar!"

For al-Amoush, like other militant Islamist leaders before him, the visit to the United States provided an opportunity to raise morale and support among American Muslims for the Islamist movement worldwide. Here, unlike in his native land, al-Amoush doesn't have to worry about the authorities clamping down on him. In Jordan, members of his Islamic coalition had come under sharp scrutiny after Jordanian police uncovered their involvement in an assassination plot against King Hussein and in efforts to supply weapons to Hamas for attacks on Israel. In the United States, he can speak without worry. Six months earlier, he addressed a smaller gathering of fundamentalists in Detroit, where he assured his listeners that it was "certainly possible to defeat America, as the Vietnamese demonstrated." He declared America "the number one enemy and . . . the Great Satan."

Despite this anti-American rhetoric, al-Amoush was, on another occasion last fall, received by staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as by State Department officials. This series of meetings was arranged by the Committee on American Islamic Relations, a fledgling organization that promotes the interests of militant Islam in the U.S. In meeting with al-Amoush, the American officials were not seeking to legitimize him or his coalition; rather, they were conforming to a policy of establishing low-level diplomatic contacts with groups all along the Islamist spectrum, in order to round out America's assessment of the Middle East. However reasonable the motives, though, such contacts have proved problematic: two years ago, for example,

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similar meetings held in Egypt with Muslim Brotherhood representatives and in Jordan with Hamas officials were stopped after protests by the respective governments.

Many times, the incendiary speech heard at Islamist conventions remains simply an outlet for frustration and a reminder of long-standing grievances. But over the past few years, it has at times, in the eyes of a few zealots, become a call for waging a kind of holy war in the U.S. One of the first indications that a militant fringe was preparing for jihad on U.S. soil was an incident that took place on August 29, 1989. That day, according to FBI documents, a Connecticut state trooper stopped a vehicle carrying six "Middle Eastern persons" near the High Rock Shooting Range in Naugatuck, Connecticut. The trooper found a small arsenal of semi-automatic weapons and several out-of-state license plates in the trunk. The guns belonged to the driver, a local gun dealer and former Waterbury policeman of Albanian origin, who said he was training volunteers to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Since the weapons were legally licensed, no arrests were made. A computer check found, however, that the extra license plates were registered to El-Sayyid Nosair, who later was arrested for the shooting on November 5, 1990, of militant Jewish leader Rabbi Meir Kahane. After that shooting, the police found in Nosair's possession a gun license registered in the name of the same former Waterbury cop who was driving the car in August 1989.

Weapons training was apparently not an uncommon practice among Nosair's colleagues, who, according to FBI reports, used at least six different shooting ranges. At the range in Connecticut, a 1990 FBI report says, they would "shoot 1,000 rounds a day at silhouette-shaped targets." Religious leaders apparently attended such sessions as well, including Sheik Tamimi al-Adnani, one of the two top commanders of the volunteer movement to support the jihad in Afghanistan.

More than two years year earlier, FBI informants had reported seeing weapons in the al-Farouq Mosque in Brooklyn. But an application for a wiretap on the mosque was denied by the Justice Department. Since any escalation of the probe could be seen as violating federal guidelines that require advance evidence of criminal conspiracy, surveillance was first restricted and ultimately curtailed. Yet, unknown to authorities at the time, the al-Farouq Mosque had also become a center for counterfeiting tens of thousands of dollars, shipping bomb components to Hamas in Israel, reconfiguring passports to enable Muslim volunteers to visit the U.S. and enlisting new recruits for the worldwide jihad.

In those days before the World Trade Center bombing, the FBI was sometimes caught off guard by the Islamist threat. On November 6, 1990, hours after Nosair was arrested for the murder of Kahane, police raided his New Jersey apartment and carted away forty-seven boxes of personal papers. But because much of it was in Arabic and deemed "irrelevant, religious" material, the contents were shelved until days after the World Trade Center bombing. When leads in the investigation of the bombing indicated Islamist involvement, investigators returned to Nosair's cache and discovered what they had missed: a road map to an international terrorist network headquartered in the U.S., including plans he detailed in one notebook to "demoralize the enemies of Allah ... by means of destroying and blowing up the pillars of their civilization and blowing up the tourist attractions they are so proud of and the high buildings they are so proud of."

Also ignored until after the bombing were cassette tapes Nosair had made of telephone conversations between the U.S.-based holy warriors and their Pakistan-based and Palestinian counterparts and leaders. In one conversation, Abdul Rahman (apparently speaking from Peshawar, Pakistan) asks his followers in New Jersey about "camps" in the United States. On the tape, a male voice responds, "It was a success. It started Friday evening and ended Monday. It lasted three days, and we expect positive results."

The World Trade Center conspiracy and subsequent trials have provided a rich source of materials on the extensive terrorist infrastructure in the New York and New Jersey areas. "But," says Revell, "it is only a small part of the picture. There is an extensive subterranean network in the United States of radical militants whose activities are not illegal. What we need to focus on is what these people are saying—that's the key to understanding what they will do."

Of all the Islamist militant groups active in America, Hamas has developed the most sophisticated infrastructure, complete with charitable, political, social and even military wings. The story of how a young man named Nasser Issa Jalal Hidmi was recruited and trained by Hamas shows how elaborate and sophisticated the Hamas military network in the U.S. has become. Hidmi's story was reconstructed by studying documents retrieved by Israeli investigators and confessions to Israeli courts by various Hamas operatives.

As a student in a Jerusalem preparatory college, Hidmi joined an Islamic religious group that served as a greenhouse for future military operatives. Motivated by a strong antipathy to Israeli occupation, Hidmi soon found his way to a cleric who went by the nom de guerre of Abu 'Ubada and supervised a unit of Hamas terror squads. In a short time, Hidmi showed promise and was selected to participate in armed training in the United States, a place he had always wanted, but could never afford, to visit.

In June 1990, a few months after arriving in the U.S. and settling in Manhattan, Kansas, Hidmi received a phone call from Mohammed Salah, a Chicago-based used-car salesman who served as commander of the military wing of Hamas in the United States. (Salah has since confessed to abetting terrorist acts and is serving a five-year sentence in an Israeli prison.)

Following Salah's instructions, Hidmi flew to Chicago for a weekend of military-style training at a campground on the outskirts of the city. In this "basic training"

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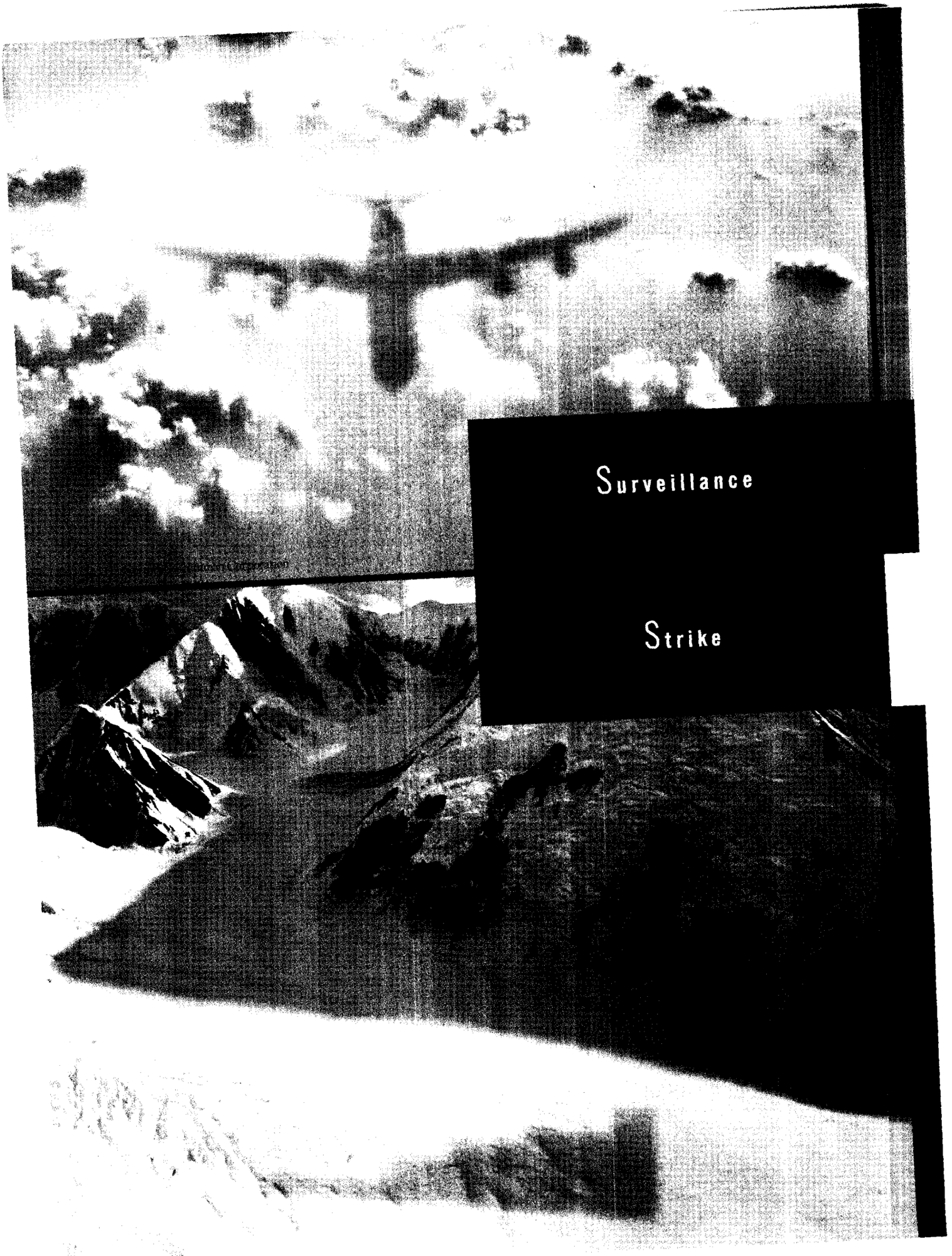

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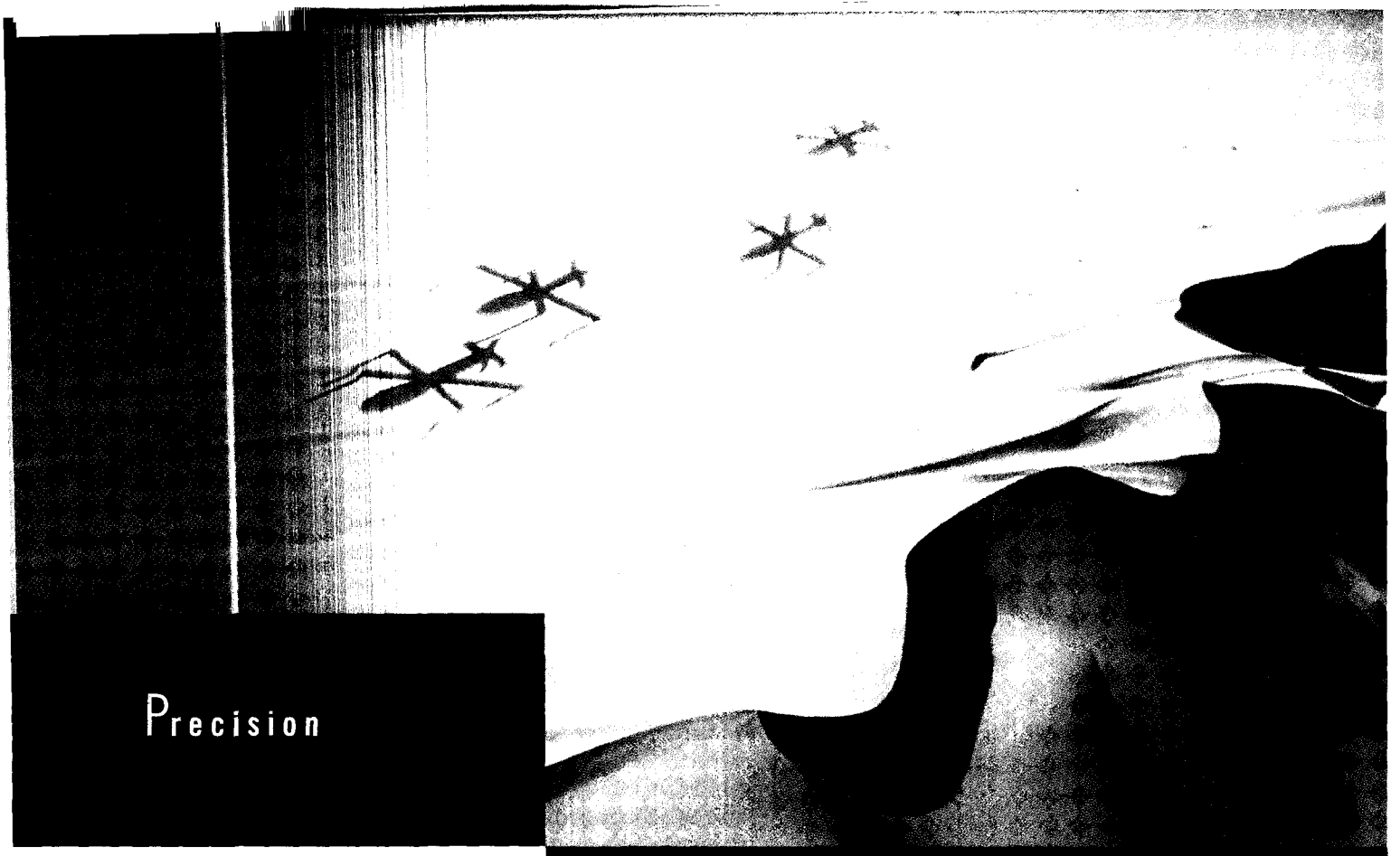

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course, Hidmi and twenty-five other young Palestinians received religious instruction. According to Hidmi's later confession, they also were taught how to plant car bombs. A Libyan-American man identifying himself as a former Marine explained to the group, using charts and diagrams, where to place a bomb in a car's engine and how to ensure its detonation at the point of ignition. Following this instruction, the recruits returned home.

Later that year, Hidmi and the other Hamas inductees were told to attend an Islamist convention in Kansas City. Over the next three days, they listened as top Hamas officials spoke of their pride in the organization and in the international Islamist movement, and railed against the Zionist conspiracy. Musa Abu Marzuk, the international political chief of Hamas, who was living in Louisiana at the time, called upon all Muslims to destroy the "outpost of Western influence" that was created with the "purpose of being a spearhead in the heart of the Muslim world."

During the conference, Mohammed Salah—the Chicago-based Hamas commander—organized a series of smaller workshops for Hidmi and other recruits at a nearby Ramada Inn. At the front of the room, a burly man introduced himself as Ibrahim Mahmoud Muzayyin, director of an organization now called the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (at the time called the Occupied Land Fund), which officially raises money for charity in the West Bank and Gaza. According to the information retrieved by Israeli investigators, Muzayyin told the group: "You have been assembled here because you are all residents of the occupied territories. And you have been chosen to carry out operations to escalate the intifadah on behalf of the Hamas movement." After a series of pep talks, the group broke into smaller clusters. The instructor explained that everyone would undergo instruction in handling improvised explosives and hand grenades and in building car bombs. They would also receive training in subjects such as interrogation and execution of collaborators, surveillance and political organizing.

Six months later, the group met again in Kansas City. This time, Mohammed Salah introduced Najib al-Ghosh, now the editor of MAYA's flagship magazine. Al-Ghosh lectured on the interrogation methods used by Israeli intelligence, as well as on different kinds of hand grenades and bombs. According to Israeli information, Salah interjected, "The purpose of all this is so that everyone will go home and plant explosives in the area where he lives."

Upon his return to Israel, Hidmi was arrested. In early 1993, Salah, too, was arrested by Israeli authorities and indicted in the Ramallah Military Court. When news of his detainment was first reported in the U.S., along with Israeli complaints that Hamas had established a terror network here, the FBI initially dismissed the allegations. "We were wrong," says former FBI official Revell. "We didn't know what was going on in our own backyard." During Salah's interrogation, conducted in Arabic, he confessed—albeit by signing a Hebrew document—to making several surreptitious trips to Israel, where he directed Hamas operations and transferred $230,000 for the purchase of weapons out of a total of $790,000 he intended to bring later. He revealed that in Chicago he kept a map of where two kidnapped executed Israeli soldiers were buried by Hamas death squads. And he told of how, following the deportation of the Hamas leadership to Lebanon, he helped rebuild the group's command structure. Other information obtained by Israeli authorities confirmed that, since 1987, Salah had recruited hundreds of Hamas operatives, arranged for their training in car bombs and other explosive devices (including chemical weapons) and even built fourteen timers for explosives himself.

Hamas has been the most successful of the militant Islamic organizations both in sending its officials to work in U.S.-based organizations and in raising funds here. Today, law enforcement and intelligence officials say, the most senior-ranking Hamas official living in the United States is Sheik Jamal Said of the Bridgeview Mosque in Chicago. Although Said has denied any links to Hamas, Salah and other Hamas operatives have told Israeli intelligence that they received instructions from him. U.S. officials also maintain that Said has worked closely with and on behalf of two other groups with ties to Hamas: the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) and the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development. Both groups are headquartered in Richardson, Texas, less than a mile apart, in nondescript strip shopping malls. "There's no doubt," says Revell, "that these two groups are Hamas fronts."

What are these organizations? The Holy Land Foundation is Hamas's overt fund-raising arm in the United States. According to its English brochures, it openly solicits tax-deductible donations for such charitable causes as "needy Palestinian children, health clinics and schools." While some of its money is spent accordingly, most of its funds are routed though local *Zakat* (or mandatory Islamic charity tax) organizations run by Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza. These organizations not only serve to indoctrinate Muslim youths into radical Islamist ideology, but also provide covert cash conduits to Hamas military squads.

The IAP, while claiming that it conducts no fund-raising for activities outside the United States, does operate an extensive propaganda network, according to a review of internal materials, videos and documents. Indeed, with offices and affiliates in more than a dozen cities, IAP is a veritable public relations machine. It publishes newspapers, produces terrorist training and recruitment videos (some showing terrorists who boast of their "kills" and interrogations of "collaborators" just before their executions), disseminates videos, organizes conferences and even sponsors a traveling Hamas musical troupe. (One of the troupe's songs includes the refrain: "We buy Paradise with the blood of the Jews.")

The IAP also publishes the largest Arabic-language newspaper in the United States, *al-Zaitonah*, as well as the English-language *Muslim World Monitor*. Both papers

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frequently celebrate successful Hamas terrorist attacks. An October 1994 headline in *al-Zaitonah*, for example, proclaimed, "IN ITS GREATEST OPERATION, HAMAS TAKES CREDIT FOR THE BOMBING OF AN ISRAELI BUS IN THE CENTER OF TEL AVIV." Other articles warn of anti-Muslim conspiracies, such as an alleged joint plot by the Mossad and the FBI to bomb the World Trade Center and throw the blame on Muslims. Despite such incendiary content, however, AT&T, MCI and other companies, as well as the U.S. Bureau of Prisons (which is in search of Muslim chaplains) have advertised in IAP publications.

Although IAP officials assure American reporters that their organization is not hostile to the United States, its conferences and publications tell a different story. In August 1990, for example, it organized an emergency conference of leading Hamas figures (recorded by IAP itself on both video and audio tape) in response to the U.S. troop buildup in Saudi Arabia. The participants issued a resolution condemning "the American crusades." Some, like Khalil al-Qawka, a Hamas leader from Palestine, wanted to go further, as he said in an address to the group: "Today, America is right here at your doorstep, in everybody's house. Ba'al, the idol, is back and stands erect in the Arabian peninsula. Is there a Muhammad to slay the Ba'al of our times?... The Marines, dear brothers, are stealing the doors of your houses, and the doors of your mosques, in obstinate and open provocation. They are at our doors. Their plan is to penetrate the flesh of our girls. And our honor, and our values, in order to turn our society into a perverted nation." Later, a choir of 8- and 9-year-old children sang revolutionary Islamist songs praising the Intifadah and Hamas.

On a narrow, dead-end street in Tampa, Florida, a sign is affixed to the last house on the block. "Izz al-Din al-Qassam ... declared Jihad against the British and Zionist invasion of Palestine," it reads. "He was martyred on November 19, 1935, in Ya'bad, Palestine. Al-Qassam has become a symbol of heroism, resistance, occupation and invasion of steadfast Palestine." Indeed, for militant Palestinians, al-Qassam may be the most exalted figure in recent history. As noted by the Palestinian scholar Ziad Abu-Amr, al-Qassam is "the main source of inspiration for the Islamic Jihad movement.... He is viewed ... as the true father of the armed Islamic Revolution."

In Gaza, there is another mosque with the same name. It's a hangout for the Palestine Islamic Jihad, a group known for decapitating and dismembering Jews and Palestinian "collaborators" and for its suicide bombings in Israel. The Jihad sees Israel's existence as part of a larger, American-directed plot against Islam, which explains why it might find it useful to maintain offshoots of some kind in the United States. According to Ziad Abu-Amr, "The Islamic Jihad movement sees Israel and America as two faces of the same coin."

Operating out of the al-Qassam Mosque on 130th Street is a group officially called the Islamic Committee for Palestine, a subsidiary, in turn, of the Islamic Concern Project. The latter defines itself as a "charitable, cultural, social, educational and religious [group] in which the concept of brotherhood, freedom, justice, unity, piety, righteousness and peace shall be propagated." It also functions as a support group to the Islamic Jihad in the U.S.

The Islamic Committee is headed by the soft-spoken Sami al-Arian, a professor of engineering at the University of South Florida. In an interview, al-Arian denied any connection to Islamic Jihad and claimed that his organization was not "political" but rather a "charitable, social and cultural-type group." When I asked him who al-Qassam was, he shrugged, "Oh, he was just a scholar." Al-Arian's claims notwithstanding, the bank account used by the Islamic Committee, according to knowledgeable sources, has been used to transfer money to and from Islamic Jihad "charities." Islamic Jihad's international Arabic newsletter (published until 1991 under the name *Islam and Palestine*) and an occasional venue for Islamic Jihad communiqués taking credit for terrorist attacks, listed the main address on its masthead as the Islamic Committee's post office box in Tampa.

When I asked al-Arian whether *Islam and Palestine* had any connection to the Islamic Jihad, he said, "I've seen most of the issues. I never saw the word Jihad on it." But a review of past issues shows that the journal has often glorified Jihad. An editorial in the December 1991 issue stated, for example, "We support with full force the call of the honorable [Ayatollah] Ali Khamenei to the Ummah for Jihad to banish the Great Satan."

One of the Islamic Committee's accessory institutions is the World and Islam Studies Enterprise (WISE), also in Tampa, which functions ostensibly as an Islamist academic outreach center, inviting out-of-town Middle East scholars and analysts to deliver lectures. Two years ago, it sponsored the visit of Hassan al-Turabi, the de facto leader of the Sudan, a terrorism-sponsoring country whose diplomats were involved in the second set of attempted bombings in the World Trade Center conspiracy. (While in Tampa, al-Turabi stayed in Sami al-Arian's home.) Last year, WISE invited Rachid al-Ghannouchi, head of the militant Tunisian fundamentalist group, to speak, but the State Department refused to grant him a visa after evidence was submitted demonstrating his support for terrorism. WISE has since established a formal affiliation with the University of South Florida.

One of the more unusual visitors to Tampa over the past several years has been Sheik Abdul Aziz Odeh, the spiritual leader of the Palestine Islamic Jihad. Following his deportation from Gaza in 1988, Odeh quickly set up offices and branches in Beirut, Amman and Damascus. Odeh later entered the U.S., slipping past INS officials unaware of his role political identity and later gravitating to two cities in particular: Brooklyn, where he had become a hero to El-Sayyid Nosair and other militants; and Tampa. In Brooklyn, Odeh became so actively involved with the World Trade Center conspiracy defendants that he was named as the only unindicted co-conspirator in the Trade Center bombing.

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Although al-Arian and the Islamic Committee have assumed a relatively low profile in Tampa, the Islamic Committee's annual conferences have been instrumental in bridging traditional divisions between radical Shiites and Sunnis. Held in St. Louis and Chicago from 1989 through 1992, the Islamic Committee's annual conferences have consistently featured incendiary calls by radical Islamists—including Abdul Rahman and Rachid al-Ghannouchi—to attack Jewish and Western targets. One year, al-Arian himself opened up the conference with this preamble: "We assemble today to stand up and pay our respects to the march of the martyrs, which increases and does not decrease, and to the river of blood that gushes forth and does not extinguish. From butchery to butchery and from martyrdom to martyrdom, from Jihad to Jihad."

Asked about Abdul Rahman's presence at the conference, al-Arian became defensive, insisting that the sheik "was not invited," that he "just dropped in" and was only allowed to address the "youth and children." The Islamic Committee's own publication, however, says that the sheik shared the podium with Palestine Islamic Jihad's head Abdul Azziz Odeh in a panel discussion titled "Insights into the Islamic March in Resistance and Victory."

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the past eighteen months, some of Abdul Rahman's apparatus has decamped from the East Coast and moved to new headquarters in San Diego, California. The San Diego-based American Islamic Group, for example, a self-described "humanitarian Islamic organization," maintains contact with and raises money for Algeria's Armed Islamic Group, the Philippines's Abu Sayyaf terrorist splinter organization, the Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad and, above all, Sheik Umar's own al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah of Egypt. Its bilingual newsletter, the *Islam Report*, calls on Muslims to support these militant causes. A typical piece in one issue, dealing with the "execution" of an Egyptian officer by al-Gama'a guerrillas, asserts: "The Mujahideen have carried out the judgment of Allah." A report on an American Air Force accident, in which sixteen Americans were killed, has the headline: "O ALLAH, LOCK THEIR THROATS IN THEIR OWN TRAPS!"

Kifah al-Jayousi, the director of the American Islamic Group, is one of Sheik Umar's many Palestinian followers. Among other achievements, he has pioneered Islamist activity on the Internet, transmitting militant messages and requests for funds (despite Internet regulations that forbid fund-raising). "My network is vast, and I have branches all over the United States," al-Jayousi told a caller posing as a potential donor over the phone. "I keep closely in touch with Mujahideen in most Muslim countries, too."

Within the American Muslim population of 5 to 6 million, radical groups and their adherents represent only an extremist fringe. Their militant interpretation of Islam does not reflect mainstream Islam, which eschews violence and thoroughly repudiates terrorism. But Muslim organizations are increasingly succumbing to the influence of militant Islam. "Islamic fundamentalists now control many of the Muslim organizations in the United States," says journalist Ahmed Said Nasr. As a result, Nasr says, "there is more genuine intellectual freedom of expression for Muslims living in Cairo than in the United States."

Even groups that represent themselves as mainstream, such as the Washington-based Council on American Islamic Relations (which is partly funded, according to a confidential source with knowledge of CAIR's finances, by radical Persian Gulf donors) attempt to legitimize militant Islam by attacking all criticism of it as racist. Giving the council "a platform to claim they are protecting Muslim civil rights," says Ashmawi, "is like giving David Duke a platform to claim he is a civil libertarian." While the council presents itself as a group concerned with fair treatment for Muslims, its media campaigns intentionally obscure the distinction between the overwhelming majority of peaceful, law-abiding Muslims and the radical militant minority.

The cruel irony for the vast majority of Muslim immigrants who came to the U.S. to escape Islamist turmoil in their homelands is that the proliferation of radical Islamist groups on American soil throws them back into the old vortex of polarized politics many had sought to escape. The danger is another matter. Militant Islam remains a fringe element in Western Muslim communities. But, as the World Trade Center bombing shows, it does not take a big group to make a big catastrophe. •

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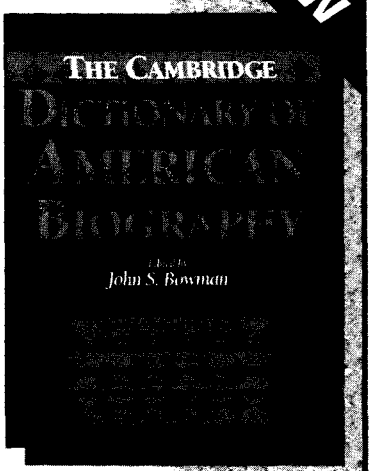

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Assorted Countries

From time to time since 1966 I've thought of Per Oscarsson. That year brought us the film of Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*, in which Oscarsson's performance as the starving, burning artist-hero was an instance of perfection. Thus I have a debt to this Swedish actor as, of course, does anyone who has seen the film, and of course I've been eager for more from him. His theater work in Sweden—he comes from the theater—was out of reach, and his film appearances here have been skimpy. At last he's here again in a substantial part.

Oscarsson's role in **Dreaming of Rita** (First Run) doesn't exactly tax him, but he couldn't be better in it. At the least it lets us see what has happened to that extraordinary face. The story is wistful comedy-romance. Oscarsson is Bob, a retired cinematographer in Stockholm who has long had a chamber in his heart reserved for Rita Hayworth—he has even named his daughter Rita. Now Bob's wife has died, and despite his own illness, he escapes from a hospital and sets out in search of an early love, in Denmark, whom he links with Hayworth in his fantasy.

This story is encased in the troubles of the real Rita, his daughter, along with her husband, her infant son and her teenage daughter, all of whom get involved in the chase after the wandering Bob. Also there's a footloose poetic young man with whom Rita tangles during this chase in a kind of analogue to her father's search for a love that existed outside a good marriage. The ending, in a summer hotel out-of-season, risks syrup but never quite slips into it.

Jon Lindström wrote the script with Rita (!) Holst, and he directed it with zest. Kjell Lagerros's cinematography makes us wish we were in most of the places these people visit. Marika Lagercrantz is very enjoyable as Rita—a Rosanna Arquette with talent. But the keystone of it all is Oscarsson's dignified nuttiness. How he makes us pine for what we've missed of his work.

It's *pâtisserie* time in Hollywood. Not that they're usually plagued with profundity out there, but soon after they send us *While You Were Sleeping* and *French Kiss*, they whip out **Forget Paris** (Columbia). This time the screenplay is by Billy Crystal, Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel. Crystal directed and is the male lead.

He's a really funny man (the best emcee for the Oscars since Johnny Carson), very amusing in *When Harry Met Sally...* and *City Slickers*. The nub of his screenplay is an unlikely match: a snappy big-league basketball referee and a smooth airline employee fall in love. Well, lots of farces start with unlikely pairings, but then comes the real work—going on funnily from there. This screenplay doesn't really grow: it limps from one welded joint to another. Laugh lines abound, though there's a surfeit of masturbation jokes, but as a whole the piece is laboriously pumped along.

There's another trouble. Crystal is a performer. Debra Winger, the airline woman, is an actress. Throughout the film, Crystal is looking for funny things to do and say while Winger is looking for a part to play. His search is more successful than hers.

They meet in Paris for an eerily trumped-up reason: his father's coffin has been lost. The father had fought in World War II, had friends in a French village and wanted to be buried there. Crystal accompanies the coffin, but at the Paris airport finds that it's gone. Crystal complains to the service chief of the American airline—Winger, of course. Developments ensue, including her guiding him around Paris and his guiding her to bed.

Eventually she follows him back to the United States, and they marry. But she grows discontent at home longing for him to return from basketball tours. There are troubles. All the above is framed in flashback: friends of the pair sit around a restaurant table waiting for them and, while waiting, they tell what they know about the romance—which we then see.

Plenty of laughs, particularly for Crystal. Some groans at the contrivances. Much discontent with the way Winger looks (Don Burgess is the less than flattering cinematographer). Admiration for her insistence on versatility. But, at the last, best wishes for her for next time.

What do Chinese people get from Chinese films? This question, basically ridiculous because of the huge dimensions entailed, nonetheless keeps pressing.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dolores Claiborne. *Kathy Bates gives compass to this role of a Maine woman twice suspected of murder. Stephen King's thriller also benefits from Taylor Hackford's directing. (Reviewed 4/17/95)* **French Kiss.** *Kevin Kline is a French thief with a heart of gold in this wispy comedy-romance. He zooms. Meg Ryan is the American woman who falls for him. She flutters. (5/22/95)* **Priest.** *A gay priest, in fact. It's crammed with sensations, but it's so well done, on the whole, that it comes out on the serious side. (5/15/95)* **While You Were Sleeping.** *You won't be. Light and tasty cream puff with Sandra Bullock as the whipped-cream topping. She pretends to be a comatose man's fiancée, then meets his non-comatose brother...(5/22/95)*—**SK**

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As noted here lately, in recent years more Chinese films have been arriving than almost any other foreign-language films. Some of the Chinese pictures have been excellent, especially those by Zhang Yimou with the actress Gong Li, most especially *The Story of Qiuju*. But many of the Chinese films we see, which of course may not be a fair sampling of the Chinese range, are banal in story and slight in character. With few exceptions, they are wonderfully well shot. With few exceptions, they tell us a great deal about Chinese topography, history, customs and daily existence under communism. But these are the virtues of travelogue, of interest chiefly to foreigners. What do Chinese people get from these Chinese films?

Here now is **Ermo** (Arrow). Predictably, the cinematography—by Lu Gengxin—is superb. The story is set amidst vast mountain ranges that are all the more impressive for being treated casually. Fascinating details abound: the marketplaces in the local village and the nearest town, the TV programs (including an American football game), the rural restaurant with its name in English under Chinese characters. But the story. The characters. What do they mean to the people who already know the domestic details that fascinate us?

Ermo is a young woman who makes twisty noodles to support her invalid husband and small son. Next door lives Blindman (the name is never explained—he's far from blind) who has a truck and trucking business and a fat indolent wife who bears him no son. Animosity between the two women, plus advances by Blindman toward Ermo, take a long time to get really going, and they lead nowhere unexpected or moving. The direction by Zhou Xiaowen is skilled enough but does little to develop character or tension.

If this story were transposed to the rural United States or Britain or France or Italy, where styles of life are much more familiar to us, its sorry triteness would loom larger. The travelogue qualities help a lot, but how long can that go on? Surely there are Chinese films of more substance than, say, *The Day the Sun Turned Cold* and *Ermo*? •

A hundred years ago at the movies.

First Takes

By Geoffrey O'Brien

A hundred years ago—to be precise, on March 22, 1895—the Lumière brothers, Louis and Auguste, scientific entrepreneurs in their early 30s, made the first public demonstration of their invention the cinematograph, a combination camera, projector and film printer. The occasion was a lecture at the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry in Paris, and the cinematograph figured as only one among a number of exhibits designed to show the latest developments in "the photographic sciences." The Lumières appear not to have anticipated the audience's astonished response.

It did not take long for the Lumières' invention to move beyond the domain of scientific discussion. By December they were giving their first commercial exhibitions in the basement of the Grand Café on the Boulevard des Capucines, and by June of the following year their films—each consisting of a single shot, a single chunk of reality captured by an immobile camera—were being shown in America, billed as "the greatest attraction of the century.... The original, the greatest and the only perfect scientific projection of animated photographs in the world": from technical curiosity to global industry in fifteen months.

There are of course alternate and equally plausible versions of the genesis of movies. It is not so much a single trail as a profusion of strands, converging somewhere around 1895; from the Renaissance camera obscura and the seventeenth-century magic lantern through the variety of nineteenth-century toys and gadgets simulating animation (zoetrope, stereopticon, choreutoscope, phasmatrope, zoopraxiscope) to the inventions of half a dozen other pioneers—Marey, Demeny, Reynaud and above all Thomas Edison and W.K.L. Dickson, who by April 1894 were exhibiting at

Geoffrey O'Brien is the author of *The Phantom Empire: Movies in the Mind of the 20th Century* (W. W. Norton).

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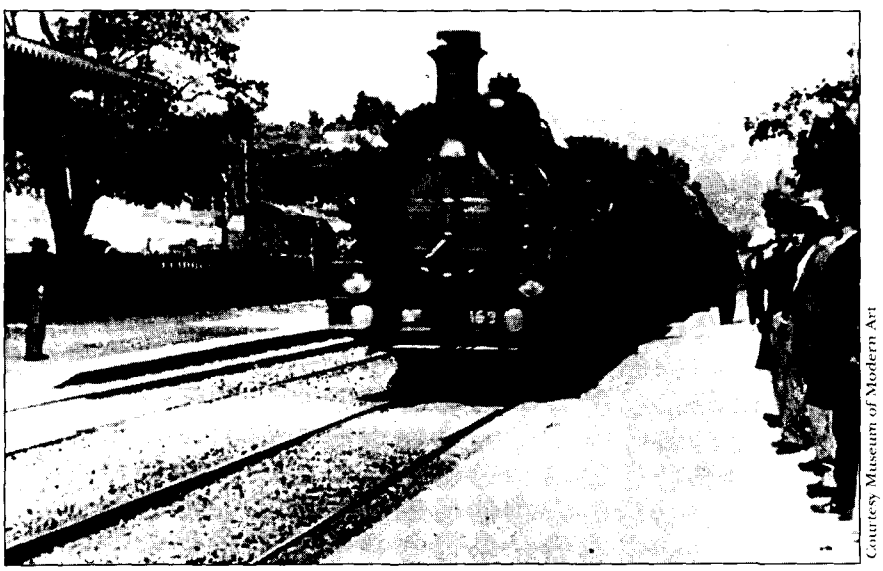
New York's Kinetoscope. These were parlor films that lacked only one element of movies as we know them: they were viewed in peepshow form rather than projected on a screen.

The question of who invented movies has been contentious from the outset, because so many were working toward essentially the same end. It was not by accident that researchers stumbled on a machine for annihilating the constraints of space and time and making dreams visible. As André Bazin remarked in 1946, in his essay "The Myth of Total Cinema," the cinema was a fully formed Platonic ideal long before it existed materially.

According to legend, the first Lumière screenings at the Grand Café elicited cries of terror as the first train in movie history steamed into view. It was an incomparable and unrepeatable shock effect, one that filmmakers have perennially, and with ever more difficulty, tried to emulate: the roller-coaster dynamics of *Die Hard* or *Speed* deploy a century's worth of technological advances toward achieving the same visceral surprise that the Lumières accomplished less strenuously by planting a camera on the platform of La Ciotat Station as a train was arriving.



Courtesy Museum of Modern Art

THE ARRIVAL OF A TRAIN AT LA CIOTAT STATION (1895)

Something of that shock can be experienced again thanks to a remarkable five-cassette compilation recently released by Kino Video, *The Movies Begin*, a survey of the earliest cinema encompassing 122 films made between 1894 and 1914. It actually begins even further back, with the "simultaneous photography" developed by Eadward Muybridge in the 1880s. Muybridge's sequential exposures are here projected at film speed and brought uncannily to life: seeing still photographs set so convincingly in motion is a little like watching a mummy come back to life. But then, reversing time is one of the primal powers of film, a fact grasped early on by the exhibitors who, after showing the Lumières' *Demolition of a Wall*, liked to project it a second time backward so that audiences could marvel at the demolished wall springing back out of smoke and debris into perfect order.

The collection radiates a rough vitality, a powerful sense of life existing beyond the edges of the frame and spilling into it in exuberant and disorderly fashion. What a range of life is on display here, either caught on the sly or acted out with boisterous enthusiasm: cockfights, boxing matches, horse races, a fracas in a barber shop, a pillow fight in a girls' dormitory, New York skyscrapers and the San Francisco earthquake, holdups and executions, reenactments of the Boxer Rebellion and the Russian Revolution of 1905, flirts and peeping toms and practical jokers, countless horses and dogs and babies, a coal mine and a biscuit factory, Ali Baba and Little Nemo, Nero and President McKinley, not to mention an unforgettable 1897 advertisement for Dewar's Scotch in which four moustached men in kilts perform a madly energetic reel with evident indifference to how very silly they look.

For every more or less realistic vignette, equal space is accorded to fantastic jokes and flights of absurd invention. Imps pop out of ovens and pots to bedevil a hapless kitchen staff, planets and posters and playing cards come to life, time is speeded up so that everyone ages in a matter of seconds, a city is destroyed by sneezing. As the filmmakers feel out the possible uses of screen space, they undermine the viewer's sense of stability in ways that are still surprising. In *The Big Swallow*, the British film of 1901, an elegantly dressed man on the street, apparently angry at being filmed, advances toward the camera remonstrating furiously: as he moves into extreme close-up, his mouth fills the screen, which goes black. Cut to the cameraman, tumbling head first into a dark abyss, after which we return to the mouth in close-up, chewing vigorously, as the offended gentleman smiles with satisfaction. The images take revenge on those who look at them. As the irate subject munches his victim, the spectator might well feel that he himself has been swallowed.

In effect, the package makes available a whole archive of early film, ranging from the earliest one-shot films of Edison and Lumière, through a whole cassette's worth of Georges Méliès's fantasy films, to a D. W. Griffith melodrama, *The Girl and Her Trust* (1912), an early enough film in most contexts but figuring here as the highly evolved culmination of two decades of work. Throughout there is blessedly little obtrusive commentary to get between the viewer and the films themselves; the snippets of voice-over explication on two of the cassettes could have been spared, but for the most part comments are restricted to a set of excellent printed notes by Charles Musser, the historian of early cinema best known for his indispensable study, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*.

So successfully does *The Movies Begin* make its case for the rich variety of early filmmaking that one might conceivably begin to question how much more is to be gained from watching movies made *after* 1914. Dialogue aside, most of what came later is already here, in exhilaratingly compact form. Indeed, a whole canon of future films surfaces in embryo. How much does John Ford's *How Green Was My Valley* add to the authenticity of the mining scenes in *A Day in the Life of a Coalminer* (1910), or Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* to the reenactment of the Odessa mutiny and massacre in the 1905 *Revolution in Russia*? The languid Italian spectacle *Nero*, or *The Fall of Rome* (1909) offers all the essential ingredients of Mervyn LeRoy's *Quo Vadis* or Anthony Mann's *The Fall of the Roman Empire* in roughly a thirty-sixth of the running time.

The earliest movies still induce a sense of wonder, even if it is attenuated by the fact that with a VCR we can control the images that once overwhelmed their viewers. Even freezing the frame or reversing the action cannot annul the recalcitrant power of these movies. It's like watching one form of life collide with another. New beginnings in art—paleolithic cave-painting, or Sumerian

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epic—are also points of breakage. By initiating new forms of knowledge, they have the effect of plunging what came before them into the realm of the unknowable. In that sense, our era begins in 1895: the era of playback. Everything previous eludes our newfound capability for resurrection.

The henceforth increasingly unimaginable pre-filmic world persists in the casual demeanor of these performers, mountebanks and bystanders pressed into service. They become, by accident, mythic figures, carrying with them the air of a different world; they seem still to confront a live audience, and to be unaware of the implications and aftereffects of capturing living motion on film. Less self-conscious than any future movie actors would be, they act as if the images had no tomorrow, as if they were evanescent like a circus turn or a slice of street theater. The future was an empty screen next week that needed to be filled.

Most of the images, of course, had no tomorrow, and it is just luck that these ones survived. Movies weren't made to last. A print was shown until it wore out; if a film's popularity warranted, it could always be shot again. Cecil Hepworth's beautifully concise *Rescued by Rover* (1905), one of the most entertaining movies in the whole set, was made in at least three different versions. (Musser neglects to note whether the same gifted dog played Rover in each version; the vigor with which he shakes the water off, after crossing a stream on his way to rescue an abducted child, marks him as the most charismatic performer in the whole series, the very embodiment of animate movement.) A film could equally well be remade by competing filmmakers. Here, a favorite gag—the old man flirting with a vivacious young woman wakes up to find himself embracing his hag of a wife—shows up in two different but essentially indistinguishable incarnations, English and French.

To satisfy curiosity and to provide a good laugh were the chief ends of most early movies, although graver ambitions (or at any rate more complex forms of exploitation) are evident as early as Ferdinand Zecca's 1901 tableau of murder, remorse and punishment, *The Story of a Crime*. Beauty for its own sake may not have been a major drawing card, but it crops up everywhere, whether by design or by accident. Knockabout farces and industrial documentaries become the inadvertent repositories of city streets, unrehearsed facial reactions, animal movement, shifts of light. Nowhere are

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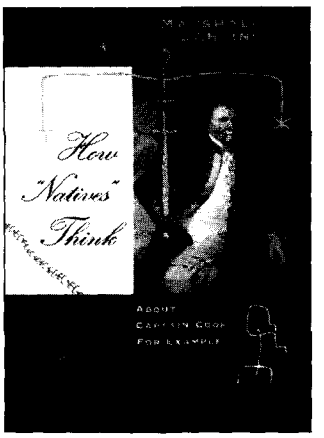

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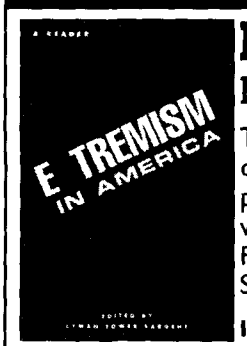

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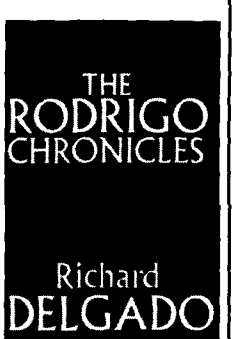

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such beauties more abundant that in the Lumière films. My only complaint about *The Movies Begin* is that it doesn't contain even more Lumière; there can never be too much. These endlessly fascinating remnants are both a point of origin for movies as we know them and a haunting suggestion of what they might have become.

They might, for one thing, have remained short. The pleasures of one-shot movies elicit a keen regret that they aren't made anymore; it's ironic that the simplest possible cinematic form should be out of bounds to filmmakers, that brevity should be the most forbidden of virtues. A movie consisting of a single shot focuses the attention wonderfully. If it is amusing to imagine a Lumière "view" as the establishing shot for an imaginary movie—the adventures, say, of one of the passengers disembarking from that train at La Ciotat Station—that is only because we have almost forgotten how to consider a filmed moment in isolation rather than as part of a sequence. If narrative has been our unavoidable destiny—so much so that we find ourselves living in terms framed by the stories movies have chosen to tell—the Lumière films offer, even at this late date, a momentary reprieve from the fixed orders of storytelling.

Courtesy, Museum of Modern Art

WORKERS LEAVING THE LUMIÈRE FACTORY (1895)

When the Lumières filed for their first patent, their invention was described as "an apparatus for obtaining and showing chronophotographic prints." It is indeed as photographs of time that they exert their fascination, the purest possible distillation of a single moment. Those tiny pieces of duration—perhaps forty-five seconds—are nonetheless extraordinarily dense with human activity. To describe everything that goes on in *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* or *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station*—every fugitive movement and sudden glance a dog scampering into the frame, a worker tugging at another worker's wrist, a man grinning as he sets his bicycle in motion, a child adjusting her hat as she descends from the train—could take many pages. The more times one plays them back, the more they contain.

Movies have learned to leave out most of that detail, pruning the scene of distractions so that we look only at what is significant; here, everything is of equal significance. Within their little compass, the unwitting subjects bustle, their existences narrowed to the length of a railroad station platform and some forty-five seconds of duration, bounded on either side by abrupt darkness. The return of the black screen has the shock of life truncated without warning, a reminder of how much art has been lavished subsequently on gently easing viewers out of movies.

Clearly the Lumières were not trying to emulate the art of haiku—the concept was something like an animated postcard—but they did make art of a profoundly contemplative order. I use the name "Lumière" in the emblematic sense of "Homer." The brothers took joint credit for their work, although Louis was principally responsible for the invention and at first almost solely responsible for the actual filming. Yet the bulk of the Lumière canon—consisting of more than 1,000 films—is made up largely of work by other cinematographers trained by Louis, who brought back views from all over the world. What the Lumières established in their first films was a standard of visual acuity at once technological and aesthetic. It was out of technical necessity that they planted the camera in one place and let the world happen in front of it.

Whatever the motive, the results suggest how much of the real movie magic is a passive phenomenon, a matter of standing back and letting things take place. I cannot otherwise account for the power of *Boat Leaving the Harbor*, in which some women stand on a jetty watching some men set off into a fairly rough sea in a small boat. It's really nothing more than a home movie; the women are relatives, the waters are in the Mediterranean off La Ciotat. Yet the image—balancing the women's waves of farewell with the rolling of the choppy waters, the firmness of rock against the fragility of the boat—is indelible, its ramifications unending: it might be a compression of whole epochs of European history, a somber ideogram encapsulating the exhilaration and terror of departure.

Movies at their beginning promised an ultimate and unconditional satisfaction of the desire to see: to see everything everywhere, to roam over the earth and through the heavens like God's eye, and all without even budging from one's seat. The audience had an infinite curiosity, and there was an apparently infinite supply of objects for that curiosity to batten on. It was as if they had seen nothing. Every subject becomes exotic by virtue of being filmed. The world was to be made over for their benefit, brick by brick and dog by dog.

We, on the other hand, begin to feel that we have seen everything. Life imitates movies, and movies themselves imitate other movies. Have 100 years really been long enough to exhaust that promise? Have we seen enough parades, coronations, beauty pageants, earthquakes, invasions? Have enough murderers been hauled off to justice, enough lovers found contentment on the other side of the hedge? As the stop-motion tricks of Méliès give way to the newest morphing techniques, are there any magical transformations we have not already imagined?

As the medium branches out into new shapes—with screens as big as living-room walls or small enough to fit in the palm of a hand, with the promise of more images than ever before, available at the slightest whim,

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endlessly replayable, malleable at the viewer's command—it is hard to avoid a nostalgia for cinema's roots, which is the same as saying a nostalgia for the world on which it has fed almost to satiety. We would like to go back, and the irony is that through the machinery of movies we can enjoy the illusion of doing so. That world isn't gone; the train continues to arrive, the porters continue to bustle importantly along the platform, the little girl persists in straightening her hat. It isn't lost, it's merely lost to us, who are condemned to inhabit the other side of the screen. The 100-year-old moving images nag at us as if to suggest that perhaps we missed the train at La Ciotat after all. •

Wayne's World

By James Wolcott

Jackie Under My Skin: Interpreting an Icon by Wayne Koestenbaum

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 291 pp., $21)

Jackie Under My Skin is a journal of addiction—the confessions of a "Jackie junkie," to quote from one of the jacket blurbs. It's an act of devotion as heady as an acid trip. Just pondering the former Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis—wife, widow, mother and damn fine dresser—sends the author into an Alice-in-Wonderland swirl. "Thinking about Jackie, I'm not ingesting an actual substance. But then why do I feel high? Why does the room around me change its shape? Why do I feel suddenly smaller, then suddenly larger?" In this zone of zero gravity, his sense of identity also begins to shimmy. "When I speak about Jackie, what do I become? A weirdo? A stalker? A fan? A mourner? A gossip? A historian? Does speaking about Jackie feminize me? Does it Americanize me?"

The quick answer to these questions might be "Get a life," "Grow up" or, depending on one's mood, "Go away." But such curt dismissal wouldn't do justice to the book's quirky individuality. The unique angle of *Jackie Under My Skin* is that the man pestering himself with these questions and more ("Do I seek out Jackie? Or does her image seek out me?") isn't some loser strain of larva living in his mother's basement, another Rupert Pupkin in the making; isn't, in short, your average American celebrity hound. No, this is a celebrity hound with credentials, a highbrow lowbrow. He writes like Addison Dewitt from *All About Eve* reincarnated as a banana split.

The author of *Jackie Under My Skin* is the poet and critic Wayne Koestenbaum. His poetry falls loosely, very loosely, in the Frank O'Hara confessional mode, as in these brief extracts from his 1994 collection, *Rhapsodies of a Repeat Offender*:

> He worked at a gas station,
> Or wore a gas station
> jersey—or I blew him
> near a gas station.
> *
> . . . I gave my boyfriend
> a tank top to mark our tenth
> consecutive day of romance.

Koestenbaum is better known, and no wonder, as a literary critic. He is an associate professor of English at Yale University, which provided a fellowship that made the writing of his ode to Jackie possible. His first book, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration*, evolved from his Ph.D. thesis, which would explain its maze-like thickets. He burst through to the public with *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire*, which reminded reviewers of Terrence McNally's *Lisbon Traviata* in its exaltation of the human voice as a vehicle of ecstasy and an escape from humdrum everyday travail.

Owing to the obsessive throb of its art, its outsized emotions and rich lore, not to mention the she-devil tantrums of its divas, opera offered the perfect opportunity for a transcendental romp. The book's patron saint and Medusa was Maria Callas, whose ten coats of shellac, Koestenbaum admits, appeal to the drag queen in him. (He worries: "Worshiping Callas, am I behaving like a vulture?") Rhapsody for rhapsody, Koestenbaum's writing was a suitable match for opera's measured hysteria. If anything, the book was too brilliant, too eager to sacrifice plain facts to rhetorical flourish. More hardline same-sexualists, to use Gore Vidal's term, resented the domesticated

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purr of his gay persona ("I'm a neat, fussy homosexual: you know the type"). He seemed to be pouring queer theory from a tea kettle.

But at a time when so much critical writing is weary, wan and top-heavy, Koestenbaum's unabashed ebullience and open embrace of beauty and spectacle offered a refresher course in the art of appreciation. There was even a long meditation called "The Shut-In Fan: Opera at Home," in which Koestenbaum seemed to be hosting an opera queen's takeoff of *Wayne's World*, sans Garth. Along with enthusiastic reviews, Koestenbaum's book won a blue-ribbon endorsement from Susan Sontag, who perhaps discerned that her "Notes on Camp" had found a successor.

It might seem an obvious hop from *The Queen's Throat* to *Jackie Under My Skin*, since Maria Callas and Jacqueline Kennedy had Aristotle Onassis in common. But while Jackie Kennedy Onassis and Maria Callas may have been star-crossed in their love lives, they are polar opposites on the passion meter. However snappish she might have been in private (it excites Koestenbaum to imagine his heroine having a Joan Crawford side), the public Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was not fiery-eyed or one to rend garments. She was all surface, famous for her glacial composure, the shiny plate of her face, the wide-apart glassy eyes that seemed to see beyond and around and through cardboard-cutout bystanders. (She would later be compared to "E.T.") When Norman Mailer met her at Hyannisport in the early 60s, he did not find himself in the presence of a woman who gave off drama. "There was something quite remote in her. Not willed, not chilly, not directed at anyone in particular, but distant, detached as the psychologists say...." Her voice, on those rare occasions she spoke in public, was small and saccharine, a breathmint imitating a pearl. So while Jackie O may have had larger-than-life legend, her personality doesn't lend itself to hyperbole. The model of restraint, the emanation of class, she requires precise strokes to be properly rendered.

She is also too scarred by tragedy to qualify as a suitable camp object à la Carmen Miranda or Maria Montez. Camp and tragedy are antithetical, Sontag observed in "Notes on Camp." There can be seriousness and pathos in camp, "but there is never, never tragedy." Trying to squirm out from under his heroine's tragic burden, Koestenbaum treats Jacqueline Kennedy's scrambling to the back of the open car after her husband's assassination as a frightful indignity, almost a faux pas. "Of course, the principal horror was JFK's death; but a secondary horror was that the world saw Jackie bloodied, the world saw Jackie crawl." As if studying the Zapruder film through opera glasses with his kaleidoscope eyes, Koestenbaum casts Mrs. Kennedy in the unlikely role of Tosca. "Everyone saw her humiliation; doubtless some perversely enjoyed seeing it. Subsequently she would have to undo the shame, get revenge on everyone who'd witnessed it." This attempt to transform Mrs. Kennedy into a sacred monster fizzles, not only because (tedious fact) Mrs. Kennedy didn't spend the rest of her life rising from a crouch to reap revenge on the citizenry, but also because we can't even picture her doing it. Her character was too contained.

It's revealing that Koestenbaum lavishes such lurid speculation on "Jackie's symbolic complicity with JFK's death," but gives only piddly attention to what many feel was her defining moment in public life: the grace under pressure she displayed in the stunned aftermath of her husband's assassination. Where another woman whose husband was murdered at her side might have been a sobbing wreck or a shock victim, she honored the duty and the importance of her public role and rose to the magnitude of the task immediately before her, the organizing of her husband's funeral. Shortly after arriving in Washington from Texas on Air Force One, she asked the Chief of Protocol for the funeral arrangements for Abraham Lincoln. Her husband would be ushered into his grave under the arch of history.

The somber pageantry of the funeral—the coffin drawn by the caisson that had carried the body of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the riderless horse, the muffled drums, the little son's salute at the flag-draped coffin, the Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral, the lighting of the eternal flame at Arlington National Cemetery—satisfied a deep-felt need for order and ceremony and solemn cadence at a time when events seemed to have taken a lunatic lurch. A sense of proper conduct is rare in a country that prides itself on its informality and its refusal to be bound by custom and precedent. She understood that ritual is what enables the living to bear the rightful weight of grief. For many of those old enough to remember, the most engraved mental images they have of Jacqueline Kennedy are the grainy photos of her in her black veil, standing next to her children. The widow-in-mourning is given short shrift in *Jackie Under My Skin* because gravitas defeats

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Koestenbaum's swinging sensibility.

Koestenbaum's desire to keep his book light and sporty ("Jackie plays Scrabble. Scrabble!") is most sorely tested by Mrs. Kennedy's own inopportune death. When he began writing the book in 1993, he hoped to snare her attention. "I had a mad notion that she would read my book and understand my desire; that she would acknowledge the legitimacy of public curiosity; that we might become friends." ("More tea, Wayne?" "How sweet of you to ask.") Alas, it was not to be. "[My] plans to scale Mount Jackie—to give voice to Jackie's charisma—were foiled. Her cancer was announced; with sad suddenness, she died."

A true fan, Koestenbaum posted himself across the street from her funeral at St. Ignatius Loyola on Park Avenue, watching the procession of mourners, applauding at the sight of the casket. Catching a glimpse of Lee Radziwill in a limo, he reflects that "Lee is all we have left." (That wistful "we" is one of the book's most telling touches. It establishes the loose fraternity of the eternal onlookers, who are as loyal as soap-opera fans to the Kennedy cult, and just as spongy.) He presses on with the production of these fan's notes, feeling somewhat queasy. It's one thing to put a woman on a pedestal, and another thing to put a dead woman on a pedestal, unless you can turn her into a saint or a goddess. "Writing about Jackie, I enter a terrain of embarrassment, error and excess. I risk sacrilege. Or I risk sentimentality—idealizing a figure who may have been insubstantial."

Koestenbaum both idealizes his subject and avoids sentimentality by turning her into a doll—a Barbie doll. The chapter titles of *Jackie Under My Skin* suggest the many sides of this glamourous action-figure. There's "Silent Jackie," "Astonished Jackie," "Exotic Jackie" and "Jackie as Housewife." In this way objectifying her, and isolating her within her separate poses, he divests her of her womanhood and substitutes a smooth simulation. Just as Barbie was a gal on the go, Jackie had her own "surreal powers" of getting from here to there. "She was a figure of transportation. She sailed away on the *Christina*. She rode in motorcades. She flew on Air Force One." Once Koestenbaum had the honor and privilege of seeing Jackie exit on her own steam. "[She] left the reception room, and I followed her to the stairwell to see her descend. She looked down at her feet as she walked, just as I'd seen in newsreels: I suppose this was a precaution against tripping." (Keen observation.)

Like Barbie, Jackie had her own dream wardrobe. Who could ever forget her Oleg Cassini dress and sable-trimmed coat at the Inauguration? Her Chanel suits? Her scarves and sunglasses get their own chapter as fabulous fun accessories. Did you think that Jackie wore sunglasses in public simply to protect her eyes from exploding flashbulbs? How literal, how reductive. "Symbolically she wore sunglasses because she'd been wounded by JFK's assassination: she'd seen the sun implode, and, blinded, traumatized, could never again face light." The sunglasses were part of her panoply. "Jackie donned scarves, with the sunglasses, to conceal her primary armament, the hairdo." Her hairdos get their own chapter (the liveliest chapter in the book—it's hard to go wrong with hair), where he rightly describes her look as laminated.

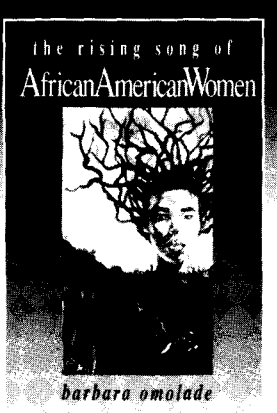
Even the buttons on her dresses come into symbolic play.

> The buttons on her coat are as big as sweet galettes. Do the buttons, promising edibility and succor, perversely echo the nuclear button (wasn't it always called a button?) that JFK might push, setting off atomic war? Were her buttons neutral, or were they part of a national defensive/aggressive machinery?

His fascination with everything that

Politics. Race. Culture.

ROUTLEDGE



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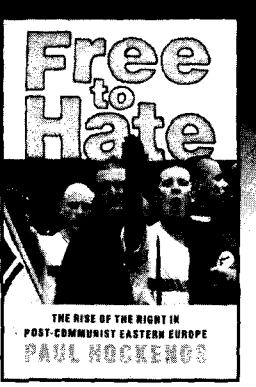

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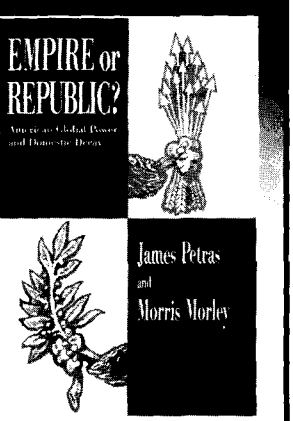

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helps keep Jackie fastened and adorned is fetishistic:

> Clip-on earrings recall the buttons on Jackie's Inauguration coat. I admire buttons because, inanimate but also secretly talkative (they speak to me, are speaking to me now), they live in the periphery of the outfit; one rarely identifies a coat or blouse by its buttons, and yet the buttons may be the outfit's central seduction. Buttons have a use—to fasten. In their modest taciturnity, buttons resemble clip-ons. Clip-ons avoid the pain associated with ear piercing; and yet clip-ons make the earlobe sore, and sometimes infected. The few times I've worn clip-ons I was surprised at the sharp pressure bordering on pain.

Hey, if you think that smarts, try wearing them as nipple clamps! But I digress.

To continue: there's an instructive moment in one of Koestenbaum's poems from *Rhapsodies of a Repeat Offender* when a woman says to the narrator,

> . . . "If a guy is gay
> there's a glaze
> in his eyes. He looks
> through you, doesn't see
> you."

In *Jackie Under My Skin*, Koestenbaum's gaze carries that glaze. He doesn't really see Jackie as a woman, a person. He zooms in such tight closeup on her wardrobe because it's the armor of womanhood that enthralls him. Reducing her to detachable parts makes her easier to reassemble and to deconstruct.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Most of *Jackie Under My Skin* reads like a parody of a postmodernist critique of Barbie catalog copy, tracing cultural signposts and subversive psychosexual ambiguities in the shiny ripples of slick plastic surfaces. Barbie is not only a popular playmate for little girls, but a central prop—the White Goddess of suburbia, her breasts the symbol of bounty—in cultural-studies writing ranging from M.G. Lord's mainstream *Forever Barbie* to university press books such as *Barbie's Queer Accessories*. It is pitched to a general audience, but Koestenbaum's book employs many of the pet devices of cultural studies, wherein a decep-

tively dinky media artifact—say, Keanu Reeves or Tori Spelling—is scanned like a product label and found to be as rich in DNA as any novel of Henry James.

"Jackie is not an object of nature. She is not an ocean or a canyon. Nor is she an art object, contrived to represent an ocean or a canyon." Having cleared that up, Koestenbaum resumes: "And yet, because we encounter her as *image*, she has the power of the object and natural phenomenon, to strike us with sensations of sublimity." To harvest that sublimity, Jackie-ness is subjected to linguistic study, photoanalysis and other tools of high-intensity diddling. As in most such studies, gender in all its mercurial guises becomes paramount and yet of dubious import. Was Jackie butch or femme? Who knows? Who cares?

The winner is the author who can wring the most meaning out of the least matter and dazzle readers with the writerly equivalent of showmanship. In the '60s, Parker Tyler enjoyed a cultish vogue with his splashy work in myth-detection (see *Sex Psyche Etcetera in the Film*, with such essays as "Revival of the Matriarchic Spirit" and "The Horse: Totem Animal of Male Power—An Essay in the Straight-camp Style"), only to be superseded in the '70s by French savants like the Roland Barthes of *The Eiffel Tower*, who peeled away subtexts with feline flair. Like Barthes, the author of *Writing Degree Zero*, Koestenbaum uses punny free-associative wordplay to decode the obvious and vacuum up the teeming plentitude of apparent nothing. It's the everything-reminds-me-of-something-else school of throwing-your-education-around. Ergo, the "O" in Jackie O comes to contain within its empty circle Anna O., O as exclamation, the Os in King Lear ("O, our lives' sweetness!"), the "o" in ozone and o'clock, *The Story of O.* Indeed, O is Jackie's Scarlet Letter:

> The O shames Jackie; the O turns her into currency, a gold piece. If money is shit, as Freud speculated, and Jackie, marrying Ari, becomes filthy rich, then the O puts the onus of dirt on Jackie, branding her with an O that signifies lucre gained through the gold wedding band (also an "O").

At other times Koestenbaum reads like Camille Paglia stuck under the hairdryer. Like her, he loves movie magazines and costume epics; his mental playground is a movie set of the schlock sublime in which Hollywood stars, classic Greek characters and Egyptian rulers strike fashion-magazine poses against the same backdrop of papier-mâché fountains and painted sky:

> Thinking of Jackie disturbed by breeze, I remember Iphigenia sacrificed by Agamemnon: Iphigenia at the edge of the water. I think, "Jackie doesn't seem to mind the fierce encroachment of the elements—wind, water. She thinks the breeze is just playing around, toying with her. Doesn't she know how dangerous husbands and nature can be when unleashed?"

For all his mental projections and ritual genuflections, he seems drawn more to Elizabeth Taylor than to Jackie, taking a loving detour in the book to linger over Taylor's tacky performance in *Cleopatra*. Here, popcorn-munchers, is a love-bucket who knows how to loll in luxury.

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Too much woman for any platoon to handle, Liz provides Koestenbaum with the surplus flesh and stylish excess he needs to pad out his fantasies.

All of his work expresses a desire to hitch his wagon to a star. And not just any star, but a female archetype that he can duplicate in drag, a wigged mannequin he can both worship and Be. "Even if it seems that Jackie disorganizes me, it is actually I who disorganize Jackie, only to reorganize her in my own image." Of course, gay men are hardly alone in projecting their dream scenarios onto Jackie. Heterosexual literary men often felt that she was in secret harmony with them, sensitive to their art in a way that JFK (who favored James Bond novels) was too action-oriented to be. Like Koestenbaum, they also hoped to hang around her and soak up her lunar rays.

Intellectual folk wanted to claim her as both patron and muse. Her marriage to Aristotle Onassis, with its cash nexus, came as a hard knock. Onassis seemed such a vulgarian; he looked like a man who ate with his hands. In Edmund Wilson's journal *The Sixties*, the author is surprised at how appalled Lionel and Diana Trilling are by her marriage to the Greek shipping magnate. "It seems to me strange that people like the Trillings should take Jackie K. so seriously, idealizing her as royalty." Reeling even more from the news of the nuptials is Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the court historian of Camelot. Over lunch Schlesinger informs Wilson that he was first incredulous, then horrified, at the Kennedy-Onassis marriage. "This event had profoundly shaken his faith in his ability to judge character," Wilson reports deadpan, making Schlesinger's befuddlement all the more hilarious.

Since Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, the most private public person the world has ever seen, spent thirty years floating a Mona Lisa smile for the paparazzi and tending her silence like a sacred trust, it's tempting to think there was nothing behind the public mask. It's hard to resist the old saw about the sphinx without a riddle. Where Garbo was lushly blank, Jackie seems almost low-cal in her lustrousness. A book like *Jackie Under My Skin* encourages us to regard her solely as porcelain or enamel.

But such surface treatment doesn't account for episodes like the startling one recounted in Robert McNamara's *In Retrospect* in which Jackie, meeting McNamara in the library of her New York apartment, became distraught and began beating on his chest, begging him

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to do something to end the slaughter in Vietnam. This outburst is more meaningful and compelling than the psychosexual ramifications of the pillbox hat. It isn't Koestenbaum's fault that McNamara's anecdote is too recently published for him to incorporate it into his ridiculous book. What is his fault is that such an anecdote has no room in the toy store that he erects to stardom and beautiful illusions. His concept of character consists of nothing but eye-candy. Biography may seem humanistic and old hat, but it's more interesting than iconography, because people are more interesting than images. The power of a good story leaves postmodernism choking on its press clippings.

JAMES WOLCOTT writes for *The New Yorker.*

Talking Points

BY ROY PORTER

Knotted Tongues: Stuttering in History and the Quest for a Cure by Benson Bobrick

(Simon and Schuster, 240 pp., $22)

In *The Remedy in the Disease,* a penetrating study of moral reasoning, Jean Starobinski reminded us of the subtle interplay of two notions that seem poles apart: health and sickness. Certain medical and moral thinkers, he observes, have long taken the view that poles sometimes meet, that afflictions, when seen from a particular viewpoint, might be regarded as "healthy," even as "remedies." Fever may be a healer rather than a measure of ill health. And what we assume, perhaps facilely, to be therapeutic may turn out to be pathogenic. Proverbs capture the wisdom of such ironies: blessings in disguise; clouds with silver linings; no pain, no gain; the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Considerations like these are brought to mind by Benson Bobrick's brief and bold history of the most tantalizing of all speech defects: the common stutter. It is a book all the more intriguing because the author is himself a stutterer—or was one, from the age of 7 until he was verging on 40.

There is widespread agreement that what distinguishes humans from other primates is the capacity for verbal communication. In the beginning, we say, was the Word. If so, it is a deprivation indeed to be deaf or dumb, though, as Oliver Sacks observed in a recent account of sign language, it is not only the tongue that can speak. Homo loquens can be eloquent even if silent. For that very reason, the story of Helen Keller continues to enthrall, and everyone recognizes the poignancy of the deaf Beethoven, having conducted the first performance of his Ninth Symphony, being gently turned to see the applause that he could not hear.

But what of stutterers, of whom there are some 2 million in America and maybe 50 million worldwide? In their own distinctive way, they are hardly less disadvantaged. For while deafness or dumbness may present a silent dignity, there is something grotesque about the stutterer, all contorted lips and anxious eyes. "I see the repulsive symptoms of an approaching stammer take possession of my face," John Updike has written of his own paroxysms, "an electronically rapid flutter of the eyelashes, a distortion of the mouth as of a leather purse being cinched, a terrified hardening of the upper lip, a fatal tensing and lifting of the voice."

To stutter has always been a serious handicap. That great New England preacher Cotton Mather, whose health guide, *The Angel of Bethesda,* carries the first American account of stuttering, was a sufferer himself. "No words can tell," he wrote self-referentially, "how much his Informity did Encumber and Embitter the first years of his Pilgrimage," partly on account of the "Derision of others." Subscribing to the conviction that stutterers think faster than they speak, Mather's advice was "Beware of Speaking too fast, as long as you Live."

The stutter is a paradox: the obstacle—a tendency to block on certain sounds—seems so trivial, the difficulty so disproportionately vast and the price in avoidance behavior so high, with all its hesitations, reticence and social shame. Worse, the impediment wears an air of absurdity, provoking suspicions that it might even be an affectation, assumed, in a hideous parody of the elegant lisp, for purposes of perverse self-advertisement. And the stutter is a puzzle. It seems, after all, easy to understand dumbness: something is radically wrong with the vocal machinery. But why ever does someone who normally can speak perfectly well, eloquently even, occasionally stutter? Why is this syllable easy, but the next a nightmare? As a "loss of control of the speech apparatus," stuttering can hence be socially strange, personally frustrating, and, no less, a gnawing enigma.

Not that there has ever been a shortage of theories to explain the difficulty. From the dawn of science, as Bobrick shows, many have postulated physiological or mechanical substrates. Greek medicine tended to put it down to the humors, Hippocrates believing the tongue was gorged with black bile and recommending blistering. Galen judged aridity to be the root cause; to moisten it sufficiently you should wrap the tongue in little towels soaked in lettuce juice. Noting that "divers, we see, doe Stut," that doyen of the "new philosophy," Francis Bacon, was to maintain that the tongue was either too dry or too cold. Measures to warm it up would make it move faster and more smoothly.

Responsibility has also been placed on other defects of the buccal cavity: something was wrong with the glottis, the uvula, palate, lips or larynx. It was recognized from early times that sufferers might literally be tongue-tied from birth. To counter this, the Roman medical writer Celsus recommended grasping the tip of the tongue with forceps, stretching the membrane beneath it with a hook and snipping it; midwives simply used their thumbnail. Among later writers, Alexander Melville Bell, father of the inventor of the telephone, blamed it all on misaligned teeth.

Alongside such physical assumptions, psychological theories have had their fans. Among the more interesting—and worth noting here, since they are rather neglected by Bobrick—were the musings of Erasmus Darwin, the polymath physician and the grandfather of the author of the *Origin of Species.* "That this impediment of pronunciation is altogether a disease of the mind, and not of the organs of speech," that astute physician declared,

> is shown by the stammerer being able to speak all words with perfect facility when alone, as in repeating a play; but begins to hesitate if anyone approaches, or even if he imagines that he is listened to. Those words also are most difficult to him to pronounce which he is conscious he cannot change for

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others, as when he is asked his own name, or the names of other persons, or of places; and the more so if he is aware that the hearer is impatient to be informed, and that he cannot conjecture the name before it is spoken.

Darwin "stammered extremely," recalled the contemporary literary lady Anna Seward, "but whatever he said, whether grave or in jest, was always well worth waiting for." Indeed, he could evidently turn it to advantage. Charles Darwin later retailed a family anecdote: a young man had once inquired of his grandfather, clearly in an offensive manner, whether he did not find stammering very inconvenient. "No, sir," he answered, "it gives me time for reflection, and saves me from asking impertinent questions." The stutter was evidently mightier than the sword.

Erasmus Darwin psychologized the impediment as a kind of approach-avoidance conflict, like stage fright. Wanting to speak well, the stutterer (he noted from bitter experience) was overcome by "a corresponding fear of failure so great that the associations of the muscular motions of articulation become impaired." Practice exercises would help:

> The art of curing this defect is to cause the stammerer to repeat the word, which he finds difficult to speak, eight or ten times with the initial letter, in a strong voice, or with an aspirate before it, as arable or harable.... To this should be added much commerce with mankind, in order to acquire a carelessness about the opinions of others.

From Freud onward, psychological explanations have assumed, of course, a particular slant. With Oedipal traumas in mind, stammering has been put down to childhood abuse, sibling rivalry, suppressed anger, infantile sexual fixations, guilt and overstrict parenting. Writing in the 1940s, the Boston physician Isador H. Coriat deemed stuttering the symptom of a severe psychoneurosis involving arrested development at the oral stage, for

> the stammerer will be seen in the act of nursing at an illusory nipple, as shown by the sucking movements of the lips and tongue, the excessive flow of saliva, deep breathing, rapid heart beat, and yawning, all followed by a feeling of relaxation after the enunciation of the difficult word.

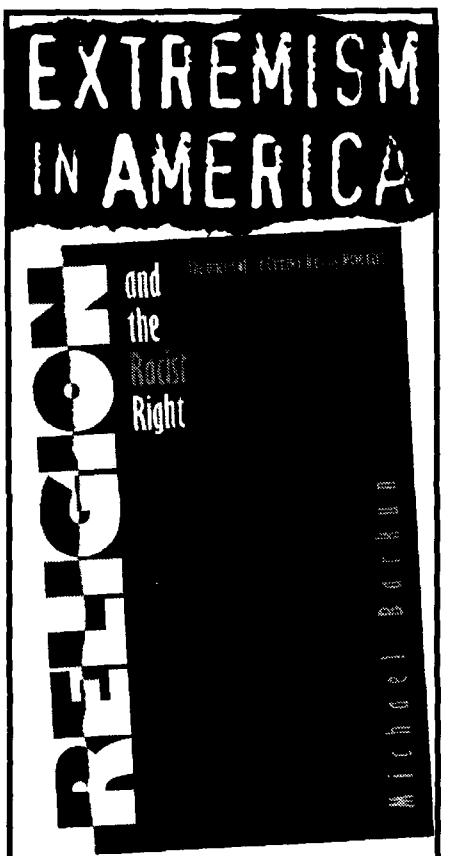
Coriat concluded (the reader will not be surprised) that the stammerer, having failed to resolve the relationship to the breast, was "a latent homosexual." In the female case, by contrast, the "tongue has become a displaced phallus," hence stuttering among women was "a combination of phallic disgust and phallic envy."

Zealous Freudian psychobiographers have had a field day with the stutter and its dark and dirty meanings. Thus, in *The Agony of Lewis Carroll,* Richard Wallace tried to show that the Victorian writer's stammer was the product of "a nightmare of constant inner turmoil on the verge of psychic destruction." Carroll's wonderland was a projection/rejection of "the destructive world of coercive parenting, the violent world of the English public school system, the worlds of pornography and erotica, homosexuality, sexual perversion, of stuttering, migraines and insomnia." The Dodo served as a stammering signature of Dodgson himself.

Another ambitious psychological theory, popular in our grandparents' days, was that all stammerers were really left-handers forced by parents or teachers to behave in a right-handed way. Such views were embraced early in their careers by two of the most celebrated recent American speech pathologists, Charles Van Riper and Wendell Johnson, who particularly cast the blame on harsh parental correction of infant speech. Putting such simplistic ideas behind them, Van Riper and Johnson went on to pioneer highly influential new "modification" techniques—ways of controlling stuttering. Johnson developed the "bounce" and Van Riper the "slide," the former aiming for a relaxed repetition of each opening sound, the latter involving lengthening the initial sounds of a syllable with a sliding through the remainder of the word, the idea being thereby to promote a stutter "tolerable both to others and myself ... to stutter so easily and effortlessly that it wouldn't matter."

It should come as no surprise that there has been this colorful diversity in the causes to which stuttering has been ascribed. After all, no amount of mere poking under the tongue or peering down the throat (or the psyche) has ever revealed a clear-cut cause that would convincingly settle the mystery of the knotted tongue. As so often in science, the solutions have lain in the eye of the beholder.

It is here that the moral of Starobinski's book becomes so germane, especially when coupled with Sacks's poignant explorations of neurological deficits. The philosopher and the neurologist force us to ponder how far stuttering should be seen as a defect pure and simple, or rather, as Sacks might say, as just another mode of being, integral, perhaps by way of compensation,



Religion and the Racist Right
The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement
BY MICHAEL BARKUN

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to an uncommonly gifted or striking personality. No small number of highly talented human beings have been stutterers: even the briefest roll call would include Moses, Aristotle and Virgil, Charles I, Robert Boyle and Charles Lamb, and, in more modern times, Henry James, Somerset Maugham and Marilyn Monroe.

This is not to imply that it might be worth trying to fund research in the hope of establishing significant statistical correlations between stuttering and talent. It is notorious that the pioneering British sexologist Havelock Ellis was tabulating, as late as the 1920s, the supposedly significant ties between genius and gout, and the alleged causal link between creativity and madness still spawns bundles of books each year. Such endeavors appear misguided, but it is not implausible that stuttering has contributed to the flowering of certain sorts of word-based talents.

Consider Henry James. The novelist was the stuttering son of a stuttering father of whom Thomas Carlyle wrote, "he confirms an observation of mine, which indeed I find is hundreds of years old, that a stammering man is never a worthless one. Physiology can tell you why. It is an excess of delicacy, excess of sensibility to the presence of his fellow-creature, that makes him stammer." James the younger was renowned for his verbal hesitancy, though most who conversed with him found their patience finally rewarded, because he weighed his words so well. "His slow way of speech," commented Edith Wharton, "sometimes mistaken for affectation—or, more quaintly, for an artless form of Anglomania!—was really the partial victory over a stammer which in his boyhood had been thought incurable." How far James's style as a novelist arose from thought patterns imposed by his impediment merits inquiry. (Apparently Marilyn Monroe's husky and sexy voice was also originally "an attempt tó avoid stuttering rather than to sound sexy.")

Here the wider issues broached by Sacks resurface. Would the world really be a richer place if all abnormalities of brain, nerves and senses were eradicated tomorrow by some medical miracle? Might stuttering be one of the cases where a disorder is, if not exactly a mode of health, at least a mode of communication? Historically, of course, we have never had to face the implications of the disappearance of the difficulty. As Bobrick points out in the most harrowing (if occasionally hilarious) section of his book, the history of stuttering has been one in which the "remedies" have mostly been worse than the disease, and benevolent medical aspirations have spawned fiasco and failure. From antiquity, manifold therapies have been touted. Born in 384 B.C. with a speech impediment (he had particular difficulties with the letter "r"), Demosthenes, eager to became a great Athenian orator, imposed upon himself the most taxing of anti-stutter measures, strapping lead plates to his chest and then declaiming while running up hills, or filling his mouth with pebbles and speechifying above the roar of the ocean.

Remedial strategies have fallen into two camps. There has been speech therapy. The Tudor physician Andrew Boorde wrote that "Whan Stuttyinge ... doth come by nature, it cannot be holpen except it be reformed in you by some discrete tutor," and his view has been endorsed by generations of elocutionists. The aim has been to regulate word flow, generally on the assumption that stuttering was a buccal traffic jam, too many words trying to spill out all at once: stuttering, according to Moses Mendelssohn, was due to "a collision between many ideas, flowing simultaneously from the brain."

From these beliefs many behavioral techniques have followed. In the seventeenth century the Swiss physician, Johann Amman, one of the first to suggest that stuttering was learned behavior, was an advocate of gymnastic exercises for the lips and the jaw. Other remedial methods have included teeth-clenching, weightlifting, prolonged silence, sighing, finger-thumping, reading aloud with the teeth tightly shut and breathing drills. Certain tutors have been confident that success would follow from tricks like swinging dumbbells or beating one's hands on one's side, or singing the words. Modern speech therapists use techniques of self-correction, gentle onset (beginning the word softly) and similar phonetic drills. Not only have most of these been unsuccessful; often they have made bad worse, by heightening self-consciousness or creating speech tics more troublesome than stuttering itself.

Still, such approaches, however misguided, may seem positively benign when contrasted with the misplaced faith occasionally vested in surgery. From Celsus onward, frenectomy (division of the frenum, the membrane connecting the tongue to the mouth floor) was recommended. But the surgical craze really got into its stride in the nineteenth century, building on prestigious new pathological anatomy. Radical surgery was introduced in 1841 by the Prussian surgeon Johann Friedrich Dieffenbach, who had already made a name for himself with cleft-palate surgery and surgery for squinting. He concluded that stammering was caused by a spasm of the glottis transmitted to the tongue in the form of a lingual cramp. "The idea lately suggested itself to me," he pondered, "that an incision carried completely through the root of the tongue might be useful in stuttering, which had resisted other means of cure." His operation consisted of making

Breezeway, Circa 1964

The leisurely fireworks of fireflies,
The cicadas rattling the trees,
The crickets' slow, relentless high-note, low-note,
All this from a stoop in Philadelphia
In a heat so encompassing, so endless,
The mauve between the power lines is motionless
Though dusk is several evenings overdue.
Still, no mother calls us from a window;
Not even a radio cries out.

Nothing. No minute is allowed to pass.
So how is it that I'm no longer there,
Mistaking the cicadas for a shift of power
Surging through an overhanging wire,
The crickets for some mild, more muffled traffic?
Such lazy stars have settled in our lawn,
On again, off again, until a strange dark moon
Entices them to join the spreading darkness ...
It 's an ordinary evening—nothing mythic,
.
Not even a memorable neighborhood. Each house
Repeats its homely, semi-detached face
As if the matching streetfront were a mirror.
I only ever wanted to get out of there.
So what, exactly, am I longing for?
Fireflies? Cicadas? Sultry air?
(I still don't understand. Can it be over?)
The sleek rococo of a passing car.
Another summer night that lasts forever.

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a horizontal section at the root of the tongue, and excising a triangular wedge so that the impulses could get through—a far more drastic operation than dividing the frenum.

Surgeons of all nationalities rushed to get in on the act. Charles Phillips, a Belgian, and Alfred Velpeau and Jean Amussat, two Frenchmen, were soon incising tongues, and the craze spread to England with James Yearsley who had the idea of removing stammerers' tonsils. Later surgeons extracted the adenoids, and even, very occasionally, tried trepanning the skull. The movement started by Dieffenbach was denounced by the British medical journal *The Lancet*, as "a perfect mania for operating," condemning "the frightful attendant haemorrhage, the great risk of losing the tongue, or life itself." Such criticism cut little ice, for surgery was just embarking upon what some see as its "fantasy" era, in which surgeons began wielding the knife seemingly with gay abandon for almost all known human disorders (and many unknown ones besides). This orgy of often futile bloodletting was caricatured in Flaubert's portrait of Charles Bovary's disastrous attempt to cure clubfoot with the knife.

The most fascinating yet frustrating section of Bobrick's book is the final one. In it he describes the chance recognition that, when wired up to electronic equipment that enables them to hear their own voices in unusual ways, normal speakers might themselves start stuttering. This suggested the idea that the way a stutterer hears his own voice is connected with his infirmity: his audio-feedback system is impaired. War experiments demonstrated that when a stutterer is subjected in both ears to high-frequency white noise above eighty-five decibels, loud enough to drown the sound of his own voice, fluency improves, leading to the opinion that stammering is most likely due to a "developmental disorder of the central nervous system," possibly derived, according to one authority, "from subtle abnormalities of central auditory functioning or sensory motor processing."

For Bobrick, these developments have spelled nothing less than personal "deliverance." He charts a chain of events in which his stutter led to a drinking problem and the breakup of his marriage. Entering a clinic, he underwent the new "voice masking" treatment. And presto! It worked. It would be churlish for the reader to demur, but the whole history of stuttering has been littered with reports of miraculous successes. One is left wanting more details about

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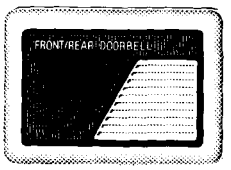

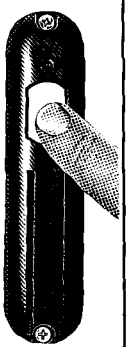

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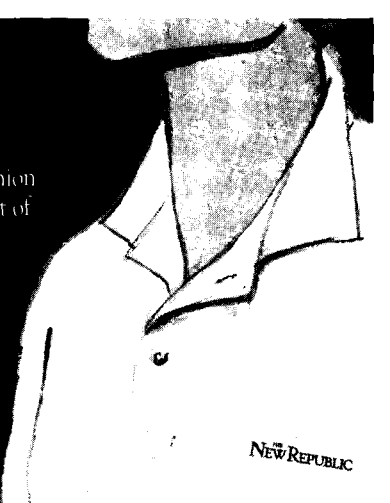

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the quality of the success and the transformation of life. Some of Sacks's "Touretters," successfully treated with drugs, felt relief, but also a sense of loss. One wishes that Bobrick had, without false sentimentality, pondered a bit more the experience of shedding his stutter, which was after all shedding of a part of himself. What makes us what we are is a great mystery, to which such "cures" can sometimes offer clues.

ROY PORTER is the author most recently, with Lesley Hall, of *The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650-1950* (Yale University Press).

The Alchemist

BY PAUL E. JOHNSON

The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844 by John L. Brooke

(Cambridge University Press, 421 pp., $34.95)

It is one of the strangest stories in the strange history of American religion. On September 21, 1823, angels appeared to a poor, half-literate 17-year-old named Joseph Smith and told him of golden plates, bearing a history of ancient America, hidden on Hill Cumorah, near his father's farm in upstate Manchester, New York. The next day Joseph visited Hill Cumorah and saw the golden plates, but he was not allowed to possess them. He returned to the hill on September 22 in 1824, 1825 and 1826, and each time he viewed the plates, talked with an angel and came back empty-handed.

Finally, in 1827, the angel allowed him to take the gold book. Buried with the plates were ancient devices called the Urim and Thummim, with which Smith decoded the book's "Reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics. Sometimes he dictated his translations to a scribe, who sat on the other side of a curtain. At other times he used a seer stone to decode the plates. At one point Joseph gave 116 pages of the translation to a follower who lost them, and angry angels punished him by repossessing the plates. There followed months of prayer and meditation, then the return of the text and a year-long flurry of translation.

The result, in 1830, was the publication of the Book of Mormon and the founding of what became the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In over 500 double-columned, biblical-sounding pages, the Book of Mormon chronicled the story of the Nephites and other Old Testament peoples who sailed to North America in ancient times. The Nephites lived in a covenant with God, went through epic periods of prosperity and privation, received a missionary visit from Jesus following the Crucifixion, then died to the last Nephite in a war with darker-skinned Americans.

Smith followed the Book of Mormon with a blizzard of institution-building prophecies and revelations. He dismissed the Christian churches as a Great Apostasy; he promised men that they could become gods who knew what Adam had known before the Fall; he restored biblical priesthoods; he pronounced marriage to be celestial and eternal (including, eventually, Hebrew polygamy); he revealed that there was no hell, but a three-tiered heaven topped by priest-gods who headed tribal families of the dead that stretched through genealogical millennia. Believers gained access to all this in fantastic temples with secret rooms and secret rituals.

John Brooke's book is a convincing attempt to make sense of these idiosyncratic and, on the face of it, highly dubious revelations. He begins by chiding academics who would reduce Joseph Smith to his nineteenth-century environment, as if Smith's religion was merely a response to some social or economic circumstance. Such simplistic reasoning, in Brooke's view, amounts to "functionalist social science," a vile expletive indeed. Instead he insists that Mormonism stemmed from the deep cultural memory of Smith himself. Brooke's approach is refreshingly old-fashioned: he simply stayed in the library until he had read everything that pertained to Smith's spiritual and religious ideas and their antecedents. The result is a fine-grained history of ideas, a reconstruction of Mormonism as a new religion with an ancient past.

Brooke's most fundamental claim is that Smith's discoveries originated in combinations of radical sectarianism and the hermetic occult on the post-revolutionary New England frontier. In making that claim, he demolishes the standard textbook explanation of early Mormonism. Noting that nearly all converts were New Englanders, many scholars have concluded that Smith's new church was in some ways a death rattle of Puritanism. In tracing the histories of fifty-three Yankee families that produced converts for Joseph Smith, however, Brooke found few Puritans. Thirty-three of these families had arrived in New England after 1650, with memories tied less to Puritanism than to the radical, magical and perfectionist reformation of the English Ranters, Diggers and Muggletonians. The other twenty families arrived in New England with the Puritans, but their ties to Congregationalism were indifferent at best; without exception, they joined perfectionist, restorationist, anti-Calvinist sects after the Revolution. These families settled into the cracks in Puritan society or along the "sectarian coast" of southeastern New England, a religious hot-house that the Puritans never controlled.

The families that would convert to Mormonism had been socially and spiritually marginal for generations. They worked poor farms and moved often, and they practiced popular magic and joined religious sects that the Puritans condemned. After the Revolution they drifted into the backcountry of Vermont, where revivals of new sects and popular magic united them as outcasts and transformed some into conjurers. These towns contained Methodist, Universalist, New Israelite and Freewill Baptist churches, as well as treasure-divining cults and new lodges of Freemasons.

The Freemasons were particularly important to Mormonism. Royal Arch Masons participated in a romantic revival of hermeticism—an ancient body of occult knowledge that had survived at the margins of European Christianity. Fragments of hermeticism came to North America with the radical sects, but Masons reconstructed hermeticism as a system. Royal Arch Masons spoke of Adam as a god who retained memories of divine knowledge after the Fall. They also told of engraved texts hidden by Adam's descendant Enoch in an arched vault, and of a priesthood that descended from father to son from Adam to the Masons of backwoods Vermont. Many early Mormons—including the scribes to whom Joseph dictated his translation of the Book of Mormon—

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were Royal Arch Masons.

On his father's side, Smith was descended from a long line of village magicians. Beginning in the wake of Salem witchcraft trials in the 1690s, the Smiths had practiced white witchcraft, offering magical protection from occult evil. They also dabbled in mining and metallurgy, in divining metals, perhaps in alchemy, almost certainly in counterfeiting—all of which had ties to hermeticism. On his mother's side, Smith inherited a volatile mix of sectarianism and hermeticism. The Macks were from the south coast, where they were surrounded by too many cults and sects to mention, and were in contact with the British and German sectarians of the mid-Atlantic region—particularly with the hermetic radicals at the Ephrata cloister. Both Lucy Mack and Joseph Smith Sr.—whom she married at Tunbridge in 1796—experienced dreams and visions very similar to those that would be granted to their son Joseph.

With this laboriously constructed spiritual genealogy, Brooke, as he puts it, "explores the particular affinities, latent and manifest, running between the religious culture of prophesy and restoration and the occult cultures of popular conjuring and esoteric hermeticism" as they were revealed to Joseph Smith, and as they appeared in the institutionalizing visions that created the Mormon Church.

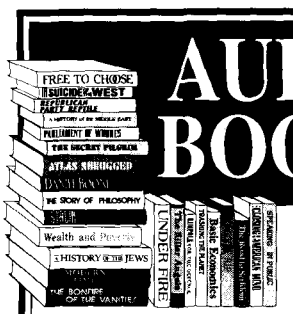
In 1830-31 the Prophet Joseph gathered the first Mormon community at Kirtland, Ohio. Those who followed him knew little about their new religion. They had the Book of Mormon. They also had Smith, and they knew that he was a prophet of God who would restore ancient truths. Most of all, they had miracles. The institutional Reformation of Anglicans, Calvinists and Lutherans had declared that miracles ended with the end of biblical times, thus creating the "disenchantment of the world" that Max Weber found at the center of Protestant rationalism. Smith, however, recruited followers who had kept occult knowledge alive, who hoped that Mormonism would bring the final triumph of ancient magic. Magic was back in the world. The Kirtland Mormons fainted, spoke in tongues, healed the sick, interpreted lost languages, levitated, had visions of the future (and of ancient times) and received revelations directly from God.

At Kirtland, Smith transformed these disorderly ecstasies into an ordered cosmology and a ritualized church that echoed hermeticism as it had been revived in Royal Arch Masonry. He began with a hierarchy of authoritative priesthoods that included all Mormon men. Two years earlier Smith had restored the Levitical priesthood of Aaron, and now he bestowed it upon "every worthy male member." For the more exalted, he restored the higher Melchizedek priesthood, which shared the Prophet's magical gifts (healing the sick, withstanding poison, handling snakes and exorcising demons) but not his prophetic powers. And Smith reigned above all, as Prophet, Seer, Revelator.

In the spring of 1836, the Prophet consecrated the first Mormon temple at Kirtland. (Smith recorded that at the dedication "many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels which fact I declared to the congregation.") Temples became the site of priesthood rituals and of believers' direct relations with the divine. Marriage and baptism were temple rites, and by the 1840s they included polygamous marriage and the baptism of the dead. Joseph made his own father the patriarch of the church, and the elder Joseph Smith bestowed "patriarchal blessings" that changed the blood of Mormon converts into the blood of Israelites, a transformation that soon extended to all temple baptisms. (This blood alchemy would again come into play when the Prophet foretold that Mormon men would take Indian women as wives, and that the children of those unions would be "white, delightsome, and just.") Eternal salvation—a gift that came to Christians only from God—was also granted through temple ritual. Through all these means, Joseph Smith made an institutional church out of magical beginnings. It was the most astonishing of his alchemical achievements.

Brooke reconstructs this story of Mormon origins with minimal theoretical pretensions. Despite nods to Mary Douglas, Victor Turner and Jung's studies of alchemy, Brooke affirms, as more and more historians are affirming these days, that any theory can be overwhelmed by exhaustive and imaginative historical research. Modern psychological and anthropological theory, Brooke seems to say, can only obscure Mormonism's roots in the ancient mysteries that he has uncovered.

Indeed, Brooke's own attempt to employ a vocabulary borrowed from the modern academy provides his book with its only false note. Like commentators from Joseph Smith's day to our own, Brooke cannot avoid questions of authenticity and fraud that surrounded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early Mormonism. Taking a flexible view of the matter, he posits a sliding scale of truth and falsity, or, as he puts it, of purity and danger. (The words, but not the meanings that Brooke assigns to them, come from Mary Douglas.) Thus in Brooke's formulation hermetic purity began with Adamic sinlessness and perfect knowledge, but slid through alchemy and on into the worldly dangers of treasure hunting and counterfeiting. "Pure" Masonry retained fragments of divine knowledge; but it was often corrupted, and some Masons in Smith's time were guilty of lying and murder. The early Smith combatted falsity and deception (what Brooke calls "danger") with restored and purified truths. He later blurred those lines, making a pure church that could legitimately use counterfeit means against a dangerous world.

In telling this story as a dance between a disembodied purity and a disembodied danger, Brooke introduces a theoretical vocabulary that is confusing and unnecessary. He might have been better off had he avoided the anthropologists and stayed with Joseph Smith. Smith's contemporaries talked about their world not in terms of purity and danger, but in terms of "Imposture." Americans after 1820 suspected that confidence men, seducers, hucksters, counterfeiters, sneak-thieves and impostures were everywhere. They lived in a new free-market society, a bank-note world that promised rationality and justice, but that many suspected was rigged by insiders. They depended on paper money that was usually authentic, sometimes untrustworthy and too often counterfeit. They worshiped their republic but distrusted every politician. They read cheap fiction and thronged to stage melodramas that portrayed a dark world of deceit and cruelty beneath placid appearances—a world in which heroes used evil means to fight for the greater good. Charles Dickens toured the United States in 1842, noted the American fascination with swindles and confidence games and declared that the "great blemish in the popular mind of America" was "Universal Mistrust."

It was into this deeply suspicious world that Smith introduced his Adamic restoration, demanding that Americans accept its truth upon his word. It was, to say the least, a suspicious request. Moreover, Smith had been suspected of fraud long before he translated the Book of Mormon. Working with a seer stone that he found in a neighbor's well in 1823, he joined his father and a coterie of village conjurers to divine for buried treasure, earning himself a reputation for shiftiness. Three years later he was indicted as a "glass looker" (that is, a conjurer) and a "disorderly person and Imposter." And four years later he revealed the Book of Mormon in ways that were certain to keep suspicion alive. The disappearances and the reappearances of the gold book, the lost pages, the "Reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics that baffled scholars at Columbia and Rutgers (thus proving to Smith that the book was a sealed text "delivered to him that is not learned"), the translation by peep-stone, the business with the curtain, the witnesses who had "seen and hefted" the golden plates and the fact that those who were not Joseph Smith's kin later defected: we must conclude that Joseph Smith expected to arouse accusations of fraud.

The aura of deception deepened over the remaining years of his life. The organization of the Mormon Church was eerily secretive. Members gained knowledge by degrees, and none but Smith knew all that had been revealed. Participants in temple rites were told that they could divulge the rituals to outsiders only on pain of death. The introduction of polygamy involved the church in multiple deceptions, both of gentiles and of suspicious Mormons. There were also episodes involving counterfeit money. The Mormon's Kirtland Safety Society Bank Company distributed bank notes until Ohio authorities reminded Smith that only chartered banks could do that; Smith renamed the institution the Kirtland Safety *Anti*-Banking Society and continued to print notes. It was a good joke, but it got Smith indicted as a counterfeiter.

And then there was the Book of Abraham. In July 1835, a showman named Michael Chandler drove a wagon-load of Egyptian mummies and papyrus scrolls into Kirtland. The Prophet Joseph viewed the scrolls and announced that they were Abraham's account of his sojourn in Egypt, in which Abraham roundly denounced the religious falsities of the Egyptians, and used a Urim and Thummim to witness a vast hierarchy of planets governed by greater and lesser gods who helped the chief God make the universe, and identified blacks and Egyptians as the sons of Ham, and banned them from the priesthood—a proscription that Smith declared scriptural. In 1967 the Chandler scrolls were translated by Mormon scholars. They are nothing more than standard funerary inscriptions written centuries after Abraham's death.

Nineteenth-century Americans received the Mormon restoration as they received other suspicious proposals. Middle-class sentimentalists drew back at the first hint of insincerity, and ignored Smith. But the poor and marginal people to whom Smith pitched his restoration were curious about such things. They acknowledged that the world was untrustworthy, and they tried to live with bravery, humor and guile amid the tricks and the tricksters. Most found Smith an entertaining puzzle and a source of amusements; others assaulted him with pamphlets, with tar and feathers, and finally with bullets. (An Illinois mob shot him to death in 1844.) But believers were utterly loyal, happy in the restoration of prophecy and in a church that vouchsafed to them secret knowledge and secret powers (not to mention the occasional counterfeit bill) with which to contend with a slippery gentile world.

Joseph Smith's church now claims 9 million members, and it is the fastest-growing Christian church in the world. It encourages the faithful to look forward to future missionary triumphs, not backward to their origins in the occult. Yet Smith's nineteenth-century counterpoint of falsity and truth continues. (The Book of Abraham remains scriptural for the Mormons, defined now as authentic ancient writings envisioned by Smith while staring at the Chandler scrolls.) To those who examine Mormon beginnings and come up doubting, the church has a standard answer: it is easier to believe that the Book of Mormon is ancient and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God than it is to believe that an ignorant farm boy could have made the whole thing up. By excavating the intellectual inheritance on which Smith drew, John Brooke has rendered that answer less effective. Yet he, too, cannot avoid grappling with the Mormon enigma as Joseph Smith presented it—an enigma that demands (as is demanded of no other major American religious figure) that we guess at the authenticity or fraudulence of the founder and the visionary. And so it goes. Smith has been dead for 150 years, and we cannot stop playing his game.

PAUL E. JOHNSON is the co-author, with Sean Wilentz, of *The Kingdom of Matthias* (Oxford University Press).

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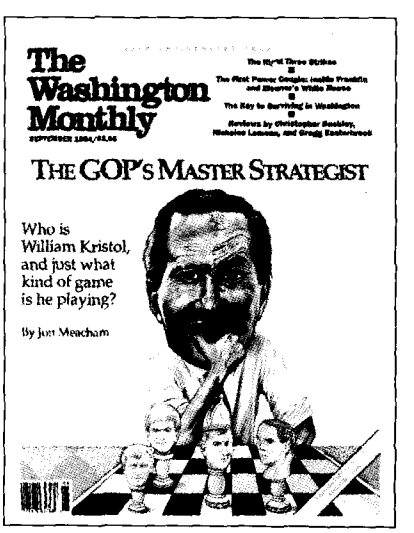
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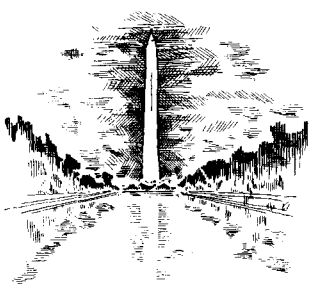
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Wild child

FANS OF MATRICIDAL HARVARD reject Gina Grant will be heartened to learn that she plans to enroll next fall at Tufts. According to *The Boston Globe*, the plucky teen has rushed the Massachusetts college a $200 deposit reserving her spot in this fall's freshman class. Grant, you'll recall, was the honors student whose early admission to Harvard was rescinded after the school learned that her mother died not in a car accident, but at the end of a lead crystal candlestick. Gina's hand was at the other end. She then tried to make the killing look like a suicide by getting her boyfriend to jab a steak knife into her dead mother's neck and wrap the victim's fingers around the handle. Oh, well. With her lemon-yellow hair and high cheekbones, Grant, whom friends have fondly likened to "the Ivory Soap girl," makes a winsome victim. And it's not just Tufts that finds her so. For weeks now, students and concerned faculty have been thronging in Harvard Square, waving signs and chanting slogans on her behalf. Admissions officers at Boston University have said publicly that Grant would make an ideal candidate. And in a particularly alarming turn of events, Anna Quindlen emerged briefly from retirement to share her thoughts on the matter (she is pro-Gina). Grant must be pleased by these developments, not least because Tufts is located in Medford, Massachusetts. She remains within striking distance of Harvard and its famously *neurasthenic president*. Just what Neil Rudenstine needs: a homicidal teenybopper with a car and a grudge, seething quietly over mochaccino a few miles away.

GRANT IS NOT THE ONLY RÉSUMÉ-padding felon whose pursuit of respectability has inspired sympathetic attention in recent weeks. Yale is currently working itself into a lather over the strange case of Lon Grammer, a C-minus community college student who won admission to Yale by, in the words of *The New York Times*, "fabricating a lustrous past." Grammer claimed he'd played minor-league baseball and was related to the actor Kelsey Grammer. The lustrous undergrad also forged an A-plus community college transcript and several letters of recommendation; and when Yale officials found out, they expelled him and pressed larceny charges. On April 21, the *Times* helped Grammer sift through the ruins of his self-esteem. "Yale was much more difficult than Cuesta [Community College]," Grammer fretted to Raymond Hernandez. "I had to apply myself." All the same, Grammer felt, he "definitely belonged" at the elite school: "I had an uncommon clarity at looking at things." Hernandez couldn't help but agree, musing that the "popular 25-year-old senior" had "done the work required of him," and indeed seemed to have "earned a place at Yale."

IN HIS PARTING SHOT, GRAMMER assailed the IQ of his fellow Yalies: "I've met lugheads there." No doubt. Each year, it seems, there are new tales of Ivy admissions officers stitched up by the same breed of upwardly mobile delinquents and professional wild children. Princeton, my alma mater, likes to refer to such applicants as "non-traditional" candidates. During my junior year, I briefly made the acquaintance of sophomore cowboy "Alexi Santana," a self-schooled noble savage from parts unknown. The 21-year-old Santana had "attended no organized school since age 10," enthused the director of admissions in *Assignment 04 Stars*, a brag sheet for rich alumni donors. "He has trained on his own in the Mojave desert, where he herds cattle for a living (mostly in a canyon called 'Little Purgatory'). He has a horse named 'Good Enough'.... On a visit to campus in March he slept indoors for the first time in two years."



IMAGINE EVERYONE'S CHAGRIN when this "self-educated son of a goat herder" turned out to be a fugitive from Utah, with a mile-long rap sheet and the *ominous compound name* of a serial killer. Santana, it turned out, was really James Arthur Hogue, a 31-year-old con artist fresh out of jail for bike theft. The cowboy credentials, along with the SAT scores, were totally fictitious. Hogue's real résumé was more impressive: In 1985, at age 25, he had enrolled in high school in Palo Alto, claiming to be Rivvik Huntman, the 16-year-old orphan son of Bolivian missionaries. He raked in medals at high-school track meets across the state before being discovered and expelled. After a brief flirtation with check forgery and bike theft, Hogue resurfaced in Vail, posing as Stanford bioengineer Dr. James Hogue. Then, one day, the thick envelope arrived from Princeton. Hogue asked to defer his entrance for a year, claiming he had to go to Switzerland to see his dying mother, a sculptress. The real reason he couldn't start: he was still doing time for heisting $20,000 worth of bike equipment.

HANDSOME AND CLEAN-CUT, though a little tousled, Hogue fit right in at Princeton. He joined the varsity track team, held Friday-night champagne parties for a swarm of women known as "Alexi's harem" and successfully bickered with the stuffy Ivy Club, a stamping ground for sherry-drinking good old boys. So perhaps it was little wonder that when campus police dragged "Alexi" off to the Mercer County Detention Center, where he would serve nine months for breaking parole, it seemed only to enhance his subversive edge and piquancy. "HOGUE: PRINCETON'S JEAN VALJEAN?" wondered *The Daily Princetonian*. Even the faculty joined in. "In words that this readership will understand, Hogue's likely punishment strikes us as 'harsh, dude,' " two political science professors wrote in a letter to the *Prince*. Comp Lit professor Clarence Brown agreed. "Just because we found ourselves last February with a plateful of egg on our face, we should not deny the world a chastened and morally redirected geologist," he wrote. "Let us readmit Hogue.... As soon as his legal troubles are over, he ought to pick up the same rocks he was examining when the sheriff interrupted him."

PROFESSOR BROWN SOON GOT HIS wish. After serving his prison term, Hogue decamped to Cambridge, where he enrolled as a student at Harvard's Extension School. By that time, the duplicitous rock jock had accumulated a long arrest record and several aliases. All the same, Harvard, too, had a soft spot for Hogue, and it hit on the perfect job for him. Hogue was appointed part-time cataloguer at the university's mineralogical museum, where he was entrusted with the university's cache of gold, silver, rubies, opals and hundreds of other precious gems. When the jewels started disappearing, campus police paid a visit to Hogue's apartment. They discovered that Hogue had helped himself to about $100,000 worth, and arrested him. As he was led away in shackles, his Harvard roomies scratched their heads in befuddlement. "He meant to take those rocks to write a paper, and I think he's telling the truth," Claire Hastie told the Harvard *Crimson*. "He could still be a successful scientist. I don't think it's too late." Hogue is up for parole in 1996. No word yet from Tufts.

RUTH SHALIT

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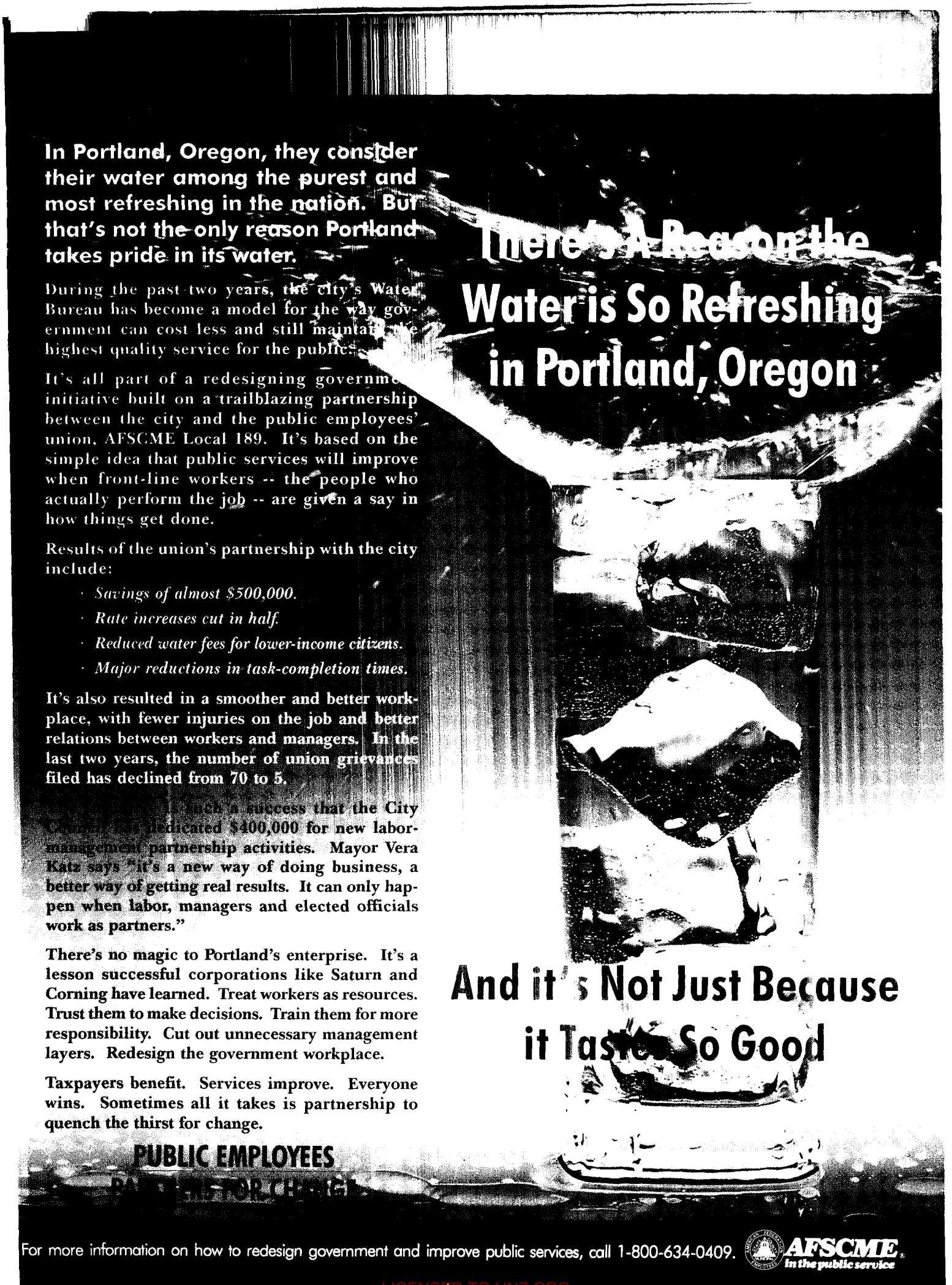

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